

THE RED BOOK

ILLUSTRATED

MAY 1903

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THE GREAT TEN PENNY
SHORT STORY MAGAZINE

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION
1015 N. W. 10TH AVENUE
MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

WATCH THE RED BOOK

THE RED BOOK is a magazine of short stories, the best stories that can be obtained anywhere, from authors of the highest fame and most conspicuous ability. As an earnest of the literary excellence and invariable interest of the material to be presented, attention is called to the noteworthy list of contributors found in the table of contents for this number, facing this page.

In all the fields of periodical publication, the best place yet unfilled is that to be occupied by such a magazine of good short stories, the one form of literature which appeals to every reader. Romance, mystery, adventure, the human sentiments and passions, are factors which touch every life with unfailing interest and claim universal attention.

DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS IN THE JUNE RED BOOK

THE RED BOOK announces, with distinct pride, that the June number of this magazine will contain the most distinguished and conspicuous feature to be found in any current periodical. This is a dramatic story by **DAVID GRAHAM PHILLIPS**, author of the tremendous serial success, "**GOLDEN FLEECE**," so highly applauded by readers of the *Saturday Evening Post* during the last few months. Readers have long known what Mr. Phillips can do with fiction in its more familiar forms. For **THE RED BOOK** he has written with a noteworthy degree of success, his first play, "**A POINT OF LAW**." It is a strikingly interesting episode of American life, full of the human quality, and ending with a denouement at the same time natural and theatrical.

It is a distinct triumph for any writer to be able to unite, in a single literary product, qualities which mark such a distinguished success in literary quality and fascination for the reader, and at the same time the dramatic power of the practiced playwright. **THE RED BOOK** considers itself and its readers to be congratulated that this genuine literary novelty is to appear in its pages, and it predicts that some one in the theatrical world who can recognize high merit will find this a prize as truly as will the readers of the magazine. Don't fail to watch for this feature, which is of equal charm whether considered as a story for reading, or a play for stage or parlor production.

In addition to this most distinguished feature, the June number of **THE RED BOOK** will be full of clever fiction by the best writers. Among those ready to announce are the following:

"**A CLUB COMEDY**," by Augusta de Bubna, a clever and startling story of "Gentlemen's Night" at a Woman's Club banquet.

"**CROSSED WIRES**," by Edward Boltwood, being a story of how a sympathetic wife tried to help in obtaining an engineering contract.

"**A CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY**," by Richard Linthicum. This is a strong story of Rocky Mountain industrial life of special interest at this time. It tells of the theft of Government timber, and the fencing of Government lands, a subject which of late has been of very lively interest in all the Western states.

"**THE FLYING CARPET OF TONAWANDA**," by W. Bert Foster, relating the experiences of a modern knight, not an Arabian; and a dozen others of like interest and merit.

The cover and illustrations of the June number will show the same degree of artistic skill that characterizes those of the current issue, and constant improvement in every detail will be the aim of all departments of the magazine.

This Month—The May RED BOOK

With the current number of **THE RED BOOK** in the reader's hand, it is desired to draw special attention to the quality of the literature and art offered in this issue of the publication. It is believed that a magazine which offers in a single number such a distinguished list of contributors as Morgan Robertson, W. A. Fraser, Elizabeth Phipps Train, General Charles King, Cy Warman, Elizabeth Robinson, René Bache, J. H. Donnelly, William R. Lighton, Harriet A. Nash, William Macleod Raine, Katharine Holland Brown, C. S. Valentine, Una Hudson, William Hamilton Osborne, William H. Hinrichsen, Charles H. Robinson, and Izola L. Forrester, is justified in expecting attention from all who are interested in good current fiction.

BEST FICTION BY BEST WRITERS

THE RED BOOK

EDITED BY TRUMBULL WHITE

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Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager.

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publishers
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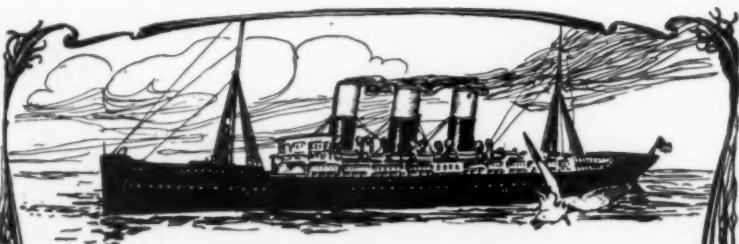
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The Four Seasons

Spring
Summer
Autumn
Winter

My Toilet

A White Rose

Shocked

He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not



Spring



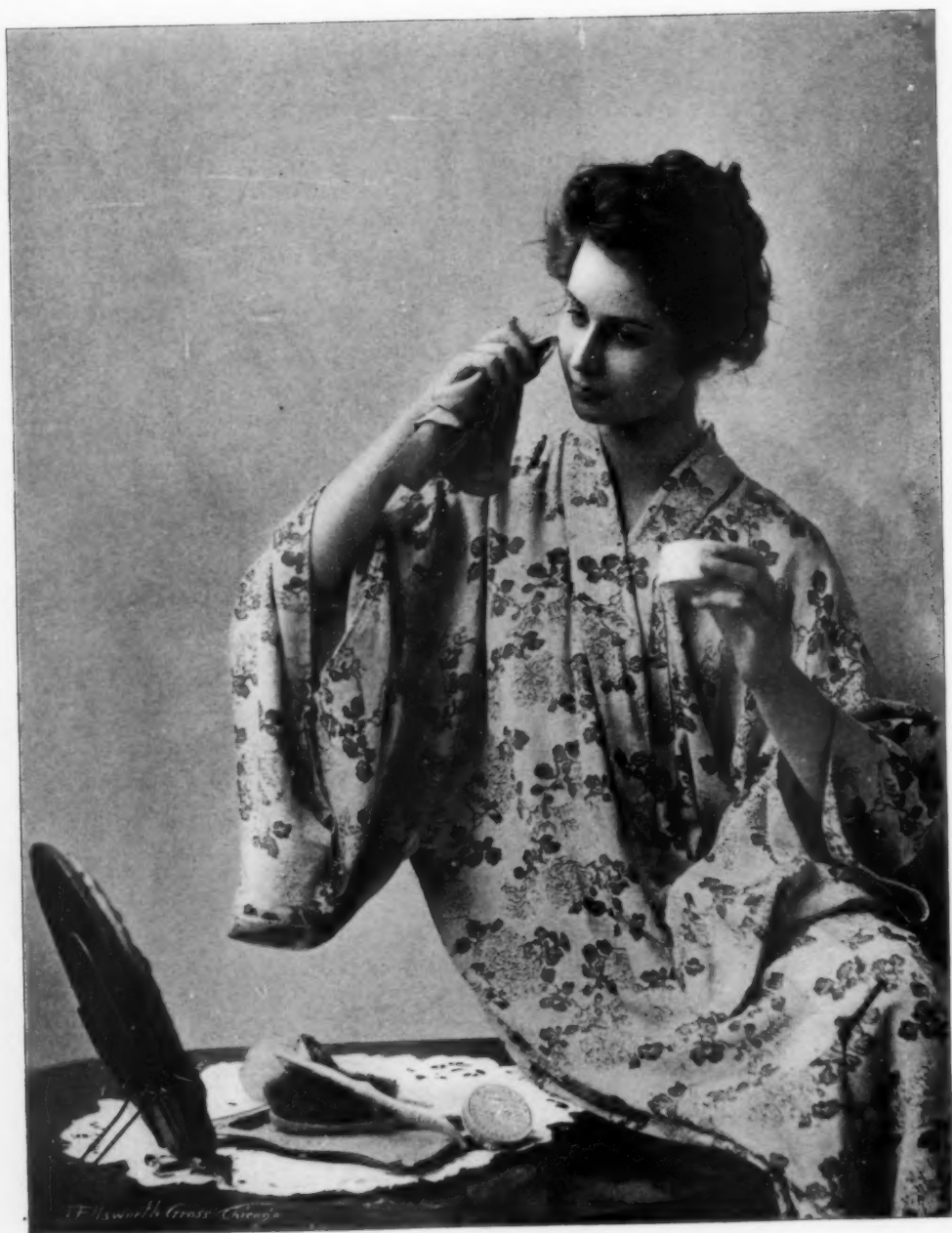
Summer



Autumn



Winter



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My Toilet



A White Rose



Shocked



He Loves Me, He Loves Me Not



DRAWN BY DAN SAYRE GROESBECK

"Captain Jackson and the mate sprang to the hatch and looked down."

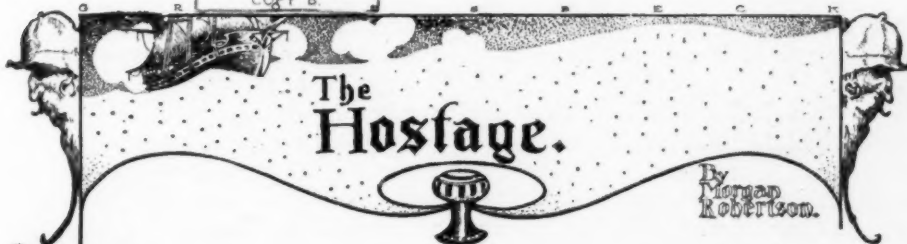
THE RED BOOK

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THAT Captain Jackson was at no time quite certain as to the true personality of Sinful Peck and his thirteen mutinous shipmates is an admitted fact. He knew that they had been delivered aboard his ship in New York harbor, helplessly stupefied, but signed to the articles for the voyage to Shanghai and home again. He knew their claim, that they were victims of Sinful Peck's nefarious plottings. He knew that their speech was that of reading men.

But Mr. Peck explained everything by the fact that these were lake sailors instead of salt-water men, and that, consequently, they had the advantage of daily newspapers ever at their command. Furthermore, the bland and buoyant little man had saved the captain's life when they of the extravagant claims had the upper hand of the ship. Therefore, the voyage southeastward across the Atlantic, through the Indian Ocean, and into the China Sea, was drawing near an end, with Sinful Peck complacent as third mate, and the riotous thirteen in irons in the lazarette.

The lazarette on board ship is the space within the poop, or quarter-deck, and is usually entered by a small hatch on the starboard side, abaft the cabin trunk, which latter is built up from the main deck and extends above it to give room for windows and companionways. The alley at each side of the house, and the open part abaft containing the wheel and binnacle, are duplicated below, and the forward ends of the lazarette alley, or "wings," can be entered by two ports under the poopsteps, closed and caulked at sea, and secured from within by ringbolts and bars. In the median lines of the alleys arise in the after part, abreast of the wheel, the quarter-bitts—strong posts for mooring the ship—which are also built up from the main deck and extend above it.

The lazarette is a handy place to stow coils of rope, spun yarn, and marline, bolts of canvas, bales of oakum, and similar stores in the mate's department. It is also a good place to stow unruly sailors, and in this regard has but one drawback—its contiguity to the cabin, through the thin walls of which may filter profanity and disrespectful opinions of the

captain and officers. And when there are as many as thirteen unruly sailors confined in the lazarette—thirteen aggressive, reckless, self-respecting Americans, reduced to the happiness of desperation, the noise they can make, the language they can use, and the songs they can sing at unseemly hours of night, give this drawback the importance of a positive menace to health.

Captain Jackson had not slept for forty-eight hours following the incarceration of the mutineers, and his consequent irritability was not decreased by the cheerfulness of his third mate, who sleeping in the port forward corner of the cabin with the first mate, had with selfish sagacity, when given the work, stretched the heavy chain to which the prisoners were manacled along the starboard alley from the quarter-bitt to the ring-bolt in the port. To this chain he had moored the unruly thirteen when conquered and docile; but now, rested and mutually encouraged, with the certainty of jail in Shanghai ahead of them, and nothing to be lost by further violence, they assumed an attitude that made their shifting over to the other side a task at which Captain Jackson hesitated.

It had been found manifestly impracticable to confine by the hands so many men, who must eat and drink; so, excepting for one, leg irons had been substituted for wrist irons, and their arms were left free. These arms were powerful levers terminating in vises or hammers, according to their owner's intent.

Of the fourteen men from Cleveland who had sailed from New York in that ship's forecabin, Sinful Peck alone had escaped the physical upbuilding coming of fresh air, hard work, and simple fare. Stoop shoulders had straightened, knotty muscles had grown on frames long burdened

with fat, obesity was gone from them, sunken eyes had filled out and brightened, many wrinkles had left their faces, and it even seemed that there were less gray hairs in their heads. In appearance they were twenty years younger, and in behavior, thirty.

But though Sinful Peck, round as a ball at the start, had lost flesh on the passage out, and become as slim and active as in youth, since his promotion at Singapore he had shown surprising recuperative power, and the plentiful fare of the cabin table and the lesser demand for active movement had increased his girth to nearly the original dimension. There was not an ounce of fat on the bodies of the whole thirteen. Sinful seemed all fat; he waddled as he walked, and when standing leaned far back to bring his center of gravity over his feet. Captain Jackson, coming out from breakfast through the forward cabin door, looked with tired eyes at the rotund figure of his third mate as he rolled about among the men, drying the deck amidships, and called to him.

"Mr. Peck," he said, with a little asperity, "you are getting too fat. You eat too much and sleep too well. Better trade rooms with me; then I'll have some sleep and you'll reduce a little. What'll you do with all that fat when your thirteen friends catch you ashore?"

"They won't dare lay hands on me at home, sir," answered Sinful, soberly. "I stand too high in Cleveland, and can jail them all under the habitual criminal law if they make a move—all but Seldom Helward. He has money."

"The one you made your bet with? Ten thousand, or a voyage with me, wasn't it? Looks as though you'd pay it all right. But if they're such a tough lot at home, how was it that they came down to see you off—you,

a lawyer and a physician—an educated man?"

"O," answered Sinful, airily, "I waived all that. We were sailors and shipmates in the old days, and it was a sort of reunion arranged by Seldom. He gathered up the riff-raff and paid their way to New York to have a laugh at me."

"And you arranged with the crimp to shanghai the lot," said the captain with a smile. "Well, it's rather funny; and you seem to have engineered me into it, too. I'm fairly committed to jail them and take them to sea again; I can't weaken and let 'em go now."

"Don't think of it, sir," answered Sinful, earnestly. "They're good sailor men if properly kept down, and hard to replace."

"Did you search them well? Sure they have no files or implements to break loose with?"

"Sure, sir. There isn't a toothpick among them; and the irons are of hardened steel, too hard to file. I tested them."

"How are the cripples getting on?"

"Fairly well, sir. Gunner Meagher and Moccassey Gill are the ones I shot, you know, and the bullets passed through. Poopdeck Cahill's broken head is mending, but he isn't quite sane yet. We have him fast by the wrists close to the quarter-bitt, and the other two moored next him on the chain, where I can 'tend them without getting in reach of the others."

"Look out for that. They could choke you to death. Have your gun

handy when you go down, and sing out if they make any breaks."

"I'm not afraid of them, sir," said Sinful, smiling confidently; "and Capt'n," he added, "in regard to my overweight, why, if you object to it, I can take it down. It's all a matter of fasting. I've fasted two weeks many a time, and can do it again."



"Sinful Peck seemed all fat."

"No, no, not at all. I was only joking."

"Thank you, sir. Then I'll go to breakfast as usual. But I'll take a look at my patients first."

The two climbed the poopsteps and walked aft, the captain, his dignity forbidding any interest in the occupants of the lazarette, halting at the binnacle, while Sinful passed on to the hatch and descended. Mr. Becker, the first mate, joined the captain a moment later, and volunteered some remarks on the state of

the weather and the incompetency of the non-mutinous portion of the crew, which were not answered. The captain was listening to Sinful's cheery voice arising from below.

"Well, Gunner, old man," it said, "and how's the arm? Pretty sore yet? You'll be all right soon, but keep away from bullets and bad company. You've worn out the seat o' your pants backsliding so much. And Moccassey; you're all right. You're born to be hung—couldn't kill you with an axe. Here, Poopdeck, that's a bad position to get into with congested brain—heels up in the air. Straighten out, man. Want more slack? Get your feet down, and keep your head up. Here, take this oakum for a pil—"

The rest was a gasp followed by a shriek.

Captain Jackson and the mate sprang to the hatch and looked down. Sinful was not in sight, though choked expostulations in his voice could be heard faintly from the darkness forward in the alley. Almost directly beneath, flat on his back, with his manacled wrists uplifted to the chain, and his knees drawn over his stomach, was the demented Poopdeck Cahill, his countenance twisting with the emotions of a disordered brain. Next to him, sprawled athwartships and fastened to the chain by the ankles, were the two wounded men; farther on was the indefinite figure of another; beyond this was darkness, and from far along in this darkness came the sound of Sinful's gasping voice.

"Mr. Peck," called the captain, lowering his head beneath the combing, "what's happened? Where are you?"

"He's here," answered a determined voice from the alley. "We've got him, and we've got his gun. I've got a bead on your head—" the captain quickly raised it—"that's

right, stay up there," went on the voice. "We can talk just as well. D'ye want to make terms?"

"What terms," asked the captain, after a moment's anxious thought. "Who is the man that's talking?"

"Me, Bigpig Monahan, d—n you."

"And I'm talking, too," came another harsh voice, which the captain knew as Seldom Helward's. "We've got your pet, and we'll keep him till you let us out o' this. Pass that spun yarn this way, Moccassey."

Moccassey Gill wearily raised himself and pushed a coil of spun yarn to the next man; it disappeared in the darkness.

"Make him fast, hand and foot, Bigpig," said Seldom. "And now, Capt'n," he called, "here he stays till you unlock us—hold on, wait. Search him Bigpig. Maybe he has the keys in his pocket. He locked us."

"Search all you like," came Sinful's angry voice. "They're in my room."

"Are you hurt, Mr. Peck," called the captain. "How did it happen?"

"No, sir. Not hurt yet, and they won't dare hurt me—O-o-o-ow-ow."

"What are you doing to Mr. Peck down there," asked the captain, sternly.

"Pinching him, Capt'n," said Bigpig. "He's fat, and good to pinch. Go get the keys and I won't pinch. If you want to know what happened, why, Poopdeck kicked him over three of us and the fourth got him. Isn't that so, Sinful, my son?"

Another howl from Sinful told of more pinching.

"No keys on him, Seldom," said Bigpig. "He's told the truth for once."

"Let up on this, curse you all," said Sinful. "What do you gain by torturing me. I haven't got the keys."

"Perhaps not, Sinful; but you're good to pinch. It's a real pleasure. Reach over here, Tosser, and take a bite. Shiner, can you get at his leg. O, he's *so* good."

Captain Jackson could hear a scrambling and shuffling from the dark, and the chain visibly tautened, indicating that more than those named were reaching for Sinful. His howls of agony soon attested their success. Men that pull ropes for a living may pinch hard.

Captain Jackson looked his first mate in the eyes.

"What do you think of this, Mr. Becker?" he added.

"I think, sir," answered the mate, a vicious expression coming to his hairy face, "that there's but one thing to do. Get Mr. Brown, and the three of us jump down together with shot-guns."

"One of us would be shot surely; they have Mr. Peck's pistol. But that would not deter me if my ship were in danger, or his life. But they will do no more than misuse him. Can *you* shoot men in irons?

"If need be. Why not, sir? You needn't take a hand. I'll do it."

"You will not," said the captain, angrily. "Go down and get the keys. I don't know what to do. I want to think. Get Mr. Brown up here."

The mate departed, returning a few minutes later with the news that the keys were not in sight, and followed by Mr. Brown, the second mate, whose working jaws indicated his interrupted breakfast. He was told the situation, but, like the captain, did not approve of Mr. Becker's suggestion.

"Mr. Peck," called the captain down the hatch, "where did you leave the keys?"

"On a nail over my desk, sir," answered Sinful. "But keep 'em there, Capt'n. Keep these brutes

locked up. They can't kill me—they don't dare—"

"Change your tune, my son," came Bigpig's voice, and Sinful's rose in a scream of pain.

"Now, little man, just ask your dear friend, the capt'n, to get the keys and let us out. Ask him nice—say please. Say, 'Please, Capt'n, go get the keys.'"

"I'll see you in h—I first," stut-tered Sinful. Then he broke forth into incoherent profanity, punctuated by yells; this subsided into a quavering moan at last, and finally, in response to Bigpig's repeated injunction to "say please," he called out, brokenly, "Oh, my God, capt'n, I can't bear it!"

"Say 'please,' my son," said the pitiless Bigpig.

"Please, Capt'n," groaned the conquered Sinful. "Please get the keys."

Captain Jackson straightened up, with kindling eyes, and said to his first and second mate, "Go, both of you, and find those keys. Ask the steward." Then down the hatch, "Men, I have sent for the keys."

"That's right, Capt'n. You'll unlock us all, and promise to give us our discharge at Shanghai, so we can get home to business. Now, while you're waiting, and before you unlock us, just listen. You're pet is in a truthful mood to-day, and he wants to tell you something. Sinful, my son, you've admitted doping us all at a wine supper in New York, and crimping us aboard with you, but you've neglected to warn Captain Jackson of what may happen to him at home. What's my business in Cleveland?"

"You're a dock-rat — O-o-o-my God, my God!"

"What's my business in Cleveland?"

"Don't, in the name of heaven! Stop—yes—a steamer capt'n."

"Correct, Sinful. What else?"

"Managing owner."

"What's my rating at Dun's?"

"I don't know."

"You knew when you sued me for fifty thousand five years ago. What was it then?"

"Half a million."

"What's Seldom's occupation at home?"

"I'm not his biographer."

"Yes you are, and a maker of history. What's Seldom at home?"

"The same scoundrel he is here—Oh, don't, do-o-on't!—yes, he's a skipper, too."

"Got as much money as I have, or more?"

"More."

"What's Gunner Meagher, the man you shot down?"

"A minister of the Gospel."

"More shame to you. What's an able seaman?"

"Newspaper man."

"An author."

"Shiner O'Toole, Ghost O'Brien, and Sorry Welch, what are they?"

"Liars and thieves."

"You mean business men, don't you, Sinful?"

"Yes, business men."

"Got money, haven't they?"

"Yes, other people's money. Take your hands off me and I'll give you all away."

"Listening up there, Capt'n," called Bigpig. "Taking this in?"

"I'm listening," answered the captain. "But what's this to me?"

"A little, if you're wise. Sinful, my son, tell the skipper what the firm of Welch, O'Toole & O'Brien can do in the way of raising ready money. How big a check could they sign on a pinch?"

"O a million, I suppose."

"Two million, maybe. Who is Yampaw Gallegher when he's dressed up?"

"Colonel in the army."

"Influential at Washington?"

"I suppose so."

"Turkey Twain."

"What's Turkey at his best?"

"A discredited politician."

"Wrong, Sinful. He was our mayor for two terms, and we'll send him to Congress yet. What are General Lannigan and Moccassey Gill on the Lakes?"

"Vessel brokers and owners."

"Own a big fleet?"

"Yes, big. The Irish get on well in this country."

"Jump Black."

"What's Jump besides What's Jump besides"

"You mean managing editor, don't you?"

"I suppose so."

"Don't suppose. Give facts. Managing editor of what?"

"The Register."

"Big, powerful daily paper, eh? What's Moccassey Gill?"

"An all-'round sharper."

"You mean a syndicate promotor, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Tosser Galvin. Who's he?"

"Another sharper."

"You are becoming too flippant in your answers, Sinful—" the howl of agony again began, rose to a scream, and sank to a moan—"who did you say Tosser was at home?"

"Oh, Monahan, don't kill me by inches! Let go."



"Tosser Galvin."

"Who's Tosser, and what?"

"A banker and a broker, and a promoter, too. Yes, and a vessel-owner, and a tug-owner—"

"That's enough. Who's his best friend in Cleveland? Needn't name him—the skipper wouldn't know him. What's his political position?"

"Chairman of the National Republican Committee."

"Strong man at Washington, eh, Sinful? Now, Capt'n Jackson," called Bigpig, "if you still think there are any thugs and dock-rats in this crowd, you are welcome to your opinion; but it'll cost you something."

"I have no opinion," answered the captain. "I only know that you signed articles as sailors, that I have punished you for insubordination, and that, in holding Mr. Peck under restraint, you are still insubordinate, and amenable to further punishment."

"What more can you do?" came Seldom's rasping voice. "You've reached the limit, and the next thing must be to kill us. The first man o' you to come down that hatch on that errand 'll be shot 'fore he can move. We've got six bullets here."

"That's right," yelled others. "We'll hang for old sheep. You've played your last card, Skipper. No more thunder left."

"As I told you," said the captain, "I have sent for the keys; but you are not yet released. Be careful how you threaten."

"O go to the devil," said Bigpig. "We'd as soon stay here; but we'll keep this little fat shyster with us for amusement."

"That is, you'll torture him?"

"We'll amuse ourselves."

Another protesting cry in Sinful's voice came up the hatch.

"Mr. Peck;" called the captain, "how are you situated? Can you stand it where you are?"

"They've tied me hand and foot, Capt'n," wailed Sinful, "and made me fast to the ring-bolt in the port. Four o' them have their hooks into me now. I could stand it if they will let me alone, sir."

Captain Jackson's face was troubled as he straightened erect. And the news brought by the two mates and the steward, who now appeared before him, did nothing to clear away the trouble. The keys could not be found. Another call to Sinful brought no light on their whereabouts. He had been careful to hang the keys in a safe place, he said, in view of this very exigency.

The captain headed another search of the whole forward part of the cabin, of the booby hatch, bosun's locker, and the deck itself. The men forward were questioned, but none had seen the keys, and summoning the carpenter, with files and steel saws, they marched aft to the poop.

"As a matter of fact," explained the captain to Mr. Becker, on the way, "I would welcome any reasonable excuse to release those men and get them to work. There's weather coming, as you can see—perhaps a typhoon. And what can we do with half of the crew in irons and the other half incompetent? And then, too, Mr. Peck once saved my life, and I can't condemn him to such punishment."

Which may, or may not, have been the real reason of Captain Jackson's complaisance. But the pedigree of his prisoners, given by Sinful, was extremely improbable, to say the least.

Chips tried a few strokes of file and saw on the leg irons of Moccassey Gill, and gave up the task.

"No use, sir. They're hardened jus' so they can't be filed. Wrist irons are softer. Will I file off them, sir?" he asked, pointing to Poopdeck's manacles.

But Poopdeck's distorted face and incoherent language made this inadvisable at present. It would not avail. Neither would it avail to release both ends of the chain—even though the forward end had not been secured to the ring bolt by a hardened steel ankle iron—and bring them on deck in a string. They would still be prisoners. Yet the captain offered them this. The soft iron chain could be cut. They received the proposition with yells of derision.

"But the keys are lost, men," said the captain. "I am willing to release you on your promise of good behavior, and discharge you at Shanghai; for there is a storm coming up, and I'll need you. Mr. Peck may be able to find the keys. Let him out, and my promise is good."

They were utterly unreasonable. They gave him the lie; he was up to some trick; he had broken his promise before; he had winked at Sinful's ill-treatment of them which had resulted in their mutiny and incarceration; he was neither man nor gentleman; on the contrary, he was several other things that cannot be named here.

And over the hubbub Sinful's shrieks of pain arose high and shrill. They were amusing themselves.

Neither Mr. Becker nor Mr. Brown had heard Sinful's enforced description of his fellow-voyagers, and the little man had not saved their lives, or in any other way put them under obligations; so they naturally could not approve of the captain's hesitation and leniency. Mr. Becker again suggested the shot-gun policy, and Mr. Brown advised smoking them into subjection. Both propositions were impatiently over-ruled. It was the listening steward who solved the problem. When the captain had despairingly turned away from them, he asked, gently, "Shall I feed 'em the same grub, sir?"

Captain Jackson sprang to the hatch, a new light in his eyes.

"Mr. Peck," he called, "how long did you say you could go without eating, to reduce flesh?"

"Two weeks, sir, and longer if necessary."

"Very well. Men, you will get neither food nor drink until you release the third mate, and I retract my promise to release you when the keys are found, and to discharge you at Shanghai."

There was silence for a moment, then a volley of invective belched up the hatch, of such voltage that they involuntarily shrank back a step or two. Then it calmed, and they heard Bigpig's deep voice grumbling out of the darkness, "All right; but you'll hear your baby's bugle every hour you starve us, and if it comes to it, we'll eat him."

"He must stand it," said the captain, determinedly, to the others.

"We'll make the Yangtse-Kiang in less than two weeks, and a man-of-war can settle the matter. It's better than shooting men in irons."

"Now, Mr. Becker," he added, with a look at a cloud bank gathering in the west, "begin with the kites, and don't stop until you have the ship under storm canvas. I shall turn in. Call me when it blows hard."

With but twelve half-trained men, the shortening down of his two-thousand-ton ship was begun none too soon. It took the whole day, and through it all the captain slept—soundly because of his utter exhaustion, and in Sinful's bunk to escape the pandemonium in the starboard alley.

But it was his last sleep in bed until, nearly three weeks later, a Yangtse-Kiang pilot boarded the ship off the Saddle Islands, and took charge. By good seamanship and forethought, even with his reduced

crew, he had weathered the gale, which, before it ended, blew his ship nearly to the coast of Japan; but early in the first night he lost his first and second mate.

There had been urgent need of a reef earring to smother and lash down a portion of the main-topmast staysail that was blowing out of the netting, and the unthinking second mate had sprung down into the lazarette, where they were kept. He did not come up, and Mr. Becker, who had seen him descend, and who lacked nothing of physical courage, sang out to the captain his suspicions, and followed Mr. Brown with drawn revolver. Neither did he come up. The captain, who had not understood his words over the noise of the gale, but who heard a pistol shot as he hastened aft, listened at the break of the hatch to the explanations roared at him by Tosser Galvin, next man on the chain to the wounded Gunner and Moccassey.

They had caught the second mate and disarmed him. They were then prepared for further action, and on the appearance of the first mate with his gun had shot him in the leg, secured him and his pistol as he fell, and lashed him, with Mr. Brown, to the chain forward, next to Sinful. They would all starve together until Captain Jackson chose to release them. And he was cordially invited to come down the hatch and join them.

Nothing could be done but to send down bandages for Mr. Becker's wound, which they humanely passed along.

Every fifth day, however, Captain Jackson yielded to the extent of lowering to them a bucket of water and a biscuit for each man, hoping that his officers would get their share, and that the taste of food in the mouths of the others would induce

them to liberate their captives. Neither result was attained. They ate the food, drank the water, cursed him furiously, and demanded the keys, strangely enough denying the truth of the assertion that the keys were lost, and believing that of Sinful, that he had left them in his room.

It was only when an armed boat's crew from an American cruiser at Shanghai had sprung into the lazarette that their judgment was shaken. There was no further need of resistance, and they quietly relinquished



"Sinful Peck."

their three weapons to the jackies, and permitted them to cut the bonds of the captives. Mr. Becker and Mr. Brown were lifted up the hatch—living skeletons, subjects for hospital treatment. Sinful followed, and though slow in his movements, with less need of assistance. His fat was gone, his eyes were bright and full, his skin, where not disfigured by a black or blue spot, or hidden by the dirt of the deck, was pink, smooth, and healthy. It was easily inspected, for most of his clothing was torn from him. He sat upon the deck, smiling benignly, and tossed a bunch of keys down to the ensign in charge of the boat's crew.

"They'll unlock the rest, sir," he explained.

Captain Jackson studied him in speechless wonder as the human

wrecks were lifted up the hatch and laid out—harmless now—on the deck.

Fasting had been good for Sinful, for the two wounded men, and for the crazed Poopdeck, in reducing surplus fat on the first, and aiding the recovery of the others; but it had nearly been fatal to Mr. Becker, Mr. Brown, and the rest, who, with no reserve store to draw upon, were barely alive.

"Peck," said the captain, "in the name of God, what manner of man are you, anyway?"

"Why, I fed on my fat, Capt'n," he answered, with an innocent look upward.

"But the keys, man. Where did you find them?"

"Capt'n, if I had told you where the keys were, you'd have let these plug-uglies out, wouldn't you, sir?"

"Plug-uglies? Then — are they not—"

"Rich men? Business men? Able to make trouble? No, sir. They're just what I always told you—rowdies

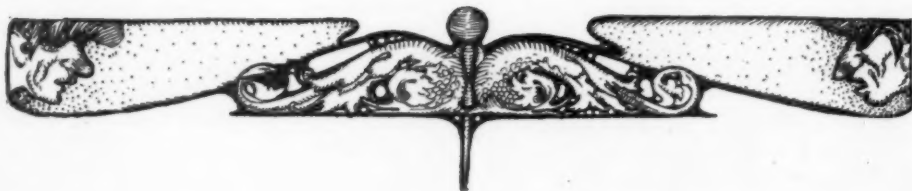
and toughs. Every reply in my catechism was whispered into my ear while they had their fingers and thumbs buried in my flesh. It was like so many dogs, biting hard. I couldn't stand it. But—you'd have let 'em out if you had had the keys, wouldn't you, Capt'n?"

"Y-y-yes—think I would."

"I knew you would—and have kept your promise and discharged 'em here, and had the laugh on you. Now, you can jail the scoundrels."

"And that's just what I'll do," answered the captain, bitterly, as he looked at his two officers tearing at some bread which the steward had brought. "But the keys? Where were they?"

"In my pocket when I went down, sir. I was at fault; so, before they tied me, and at their first mention of making terms, I took 'em quietly out and laid them on the deck, close to the cabin trunk. They've been there ever since, and I picked 'em up on the way out."



The Medicine-Making of Naskiwis

BY W. A. FRASER

Author of "Eye of a God," "Mooswa of the Boundaries," "The Outcast," etc.

Late in November I stood on the platform of Calgary Station at 2 A. M., waiting for the Canadian Express. A cutting wind swept down from a gap in the Rockies and lay against my skin as though I were clothed in fret-work. Across the level sea of a short-grassed prairie a single blaring eye was staring at me out of the darkness, slow-crawling up the horizon from the West like a wandering moon. And presently it had swirled past in its forehead-setting of a huge Cyclops that hissed and spluttered in the labor of staying the onward rush of long, dim-lighted cars, wherein were many people asleep.

Without regret I clambered with eager haste to the warm interior of a sleeper, knowing nothing of Jahn Olsen.

The car was weirdly gloomy, either side draped with dull hanging curtains, and nothing of animation visible but the sleep-surlied porter.

My own discontent was because of the outer cold, and here was much warmth and thick, generous blankets, and a promise of deep sleep with no early wakening. But I did not sleep.

There was no occult reason for my wakefulness—no noises; I was tired, and yet until morning I lay wide-eyed, wondering who was in the berth across the aisle. I drew fanciful pictures of its occupant—always evil faces; sometimes the face of a man, sometimes it was a woman's; but always possessed of sinister eyes.

At the first bustle I came out of my night sleeplessness into a day wakefulness, and full of nervous weariness, dressed and waited for a solution of the question that had been the folly of the night hours. In my nervous state the interest that attached to waiting for the embodiment

of the disturbing spirit was an occupation—something equivalent to tapping on the window.

At last the curtains opposite undulated vertically and three very pink fingers thrust through and separated the holding cords from their buttons; then a tall, fair-haired giant stood up and looked about through a pair of blue eyes—cherub eyes. As they met mine they were sweet in their simplicity. Then the giant's rosy lips



"Her name was Aidine."

parted in a smile that was like delicate setting for an even row of pearls. He nodded, and said "Good morning." I think I sent back a stiff recognition—I'm not sure, for I was troubling over the incongruity of attaching evil dream-faces to such a being.

But I was not done with obtrusive individualities, for when the porter had transformed another section into a place of seats, I encountered the Madonna; that is, the Madonna of the "Manitoba," our sleeper.

She was as dark as the giant was fair; the olive of her skin enhanced by the pallor of a recent coast-fever that had burned the redness to ash; but in the big, dark eyes sometimes flashed a fire most assuredly capable of burning to ash many a strong heart. These things swept the Madonna precipitately into one's consciousness—the luminous pallor, the straight nose a trifle long, a great sweep of rich, black hair, and the eyes. After all, it was the eyes.

There were days of companionship in travel ahead of the dwellers in the "Manitoba," and I watched eagerly for the first tide that might float me into a closer acquaintanceship with those who had come from across the Rockies.

I knew perfectly that the fair giant would come to me as soon as he had finished his toilet; his blue eyes had looked back and said so as he passed through the door of the smoking-room. Presently he came; and as he talked I struggled with the problem of his nationality. There was a distinctive something in his accent—what was it? He had been born somewhere on the outer edge of my horizon, I knew. I failed in conjecture, and it was he who told me of the little village of Sweden where still lived his mother. Without doubt the physique, and the teeth, and the blue eyes with their wealth of

gentleness, like a lion at rest, could have been from no other land.

Then he told me his name, Jahn Olsen; and the Madonna's name was Aidine. Her name followed so readily in sequence that a new conjecture was forced upon me—his thoughts, like mine, were of the beautiful face. He knew her since two days, the time of their journey from the Pacific. They were going to Montreal—she and her mother; was I? He would leave us at Heron Lake. But it was well; we should all be together for three days; he would present me, so that life, which at best was dull, might lose no chance of being made brighter.

Jahn was like an Oriental in the rich coloring of his mind.

As I went forward in charge of Jahn, the elder woman's face lighted up with a sweet welcome; it was good to be friend to the blue-eyed man.

Jahn was anomalous; he was sensitively modest, yet the conversation was mostly by Jahn, and of Jahn. He was a boy, and as artless.

It was only at the summons of My Lady Nicotine that Jahn and I separated ourselves from Aidine, the Madonna, and her mother. At such times my friend's talk was of the Grecian-faced girl. Jahn was in love. But that was a most ordinary something—that was not an influence to reach out from a man who slumbered and scatter imps of unrest in the berth of one tired.

The shadow of a tragedy lurked behind those placid blue eyes; for my disquiet was not of a fatuous fancy born of unstrung nerves. I had hunted bighorn for a month in the South Kootenay, and my muscles and mind were at rest. I knew it would happen, the something; but when?

Jahn was captivating. He spoke four Indian dialects. In knowledge of the redman's ways he was an Indian. He was a member of histori-

cal societies; had been decorated for his scientific research; had written an exhaustive treatise on the discovery of America by the Norseman. And yet he was a believer in unreal things; a theosophist.

It was the second day of our union that this came out. He showed a photograph, dim, unreal, intangible, almost seeming to fade away and grow distinct again as we looked upon it, that had been projected in Sweden while its flesh embodiment lay dying in the Northwest.

All the authentic confirmation of this and other strange happenings Jahn had in letters and newspaper extracts.

I was scarcely less skeptical than the Madonna; but he was so simply honest in it all, so devoid of excuse and explanation in his faith, that we pretended to believe.

From this Jahn went on to the "medicine-making" of the Indians, which was one and the same thing with barbaric surroundings.

It was true, every bit of it, he asserted, with a trifle of his mildness obliterated, that the Indians could tell by muscular twitchings when a stranger was approaching, though he might be two or three days' journey afar.

Drawn on by his subject, I think it was inadvertently, he came to speak of something that was in his own life out of this, and as he talked, the evil face that had come to me that first night stood out clear and strong, obliterating even the Madonna eyes of Aidine—and it was a woman's face.

Some four years before, so the

Swede's story ran, he had been Indian agent on a Cree Reserve east of Winnipeg. We should pass this place the next night, he assured us. Then he had gone away from Heron Lake Reserve because—because it was better, and because of Naskiwis. Naskiwis was the chief's daughter.

Also, I said to myself, Naskiwis has the malevolent eyes that robbed me of sleep.

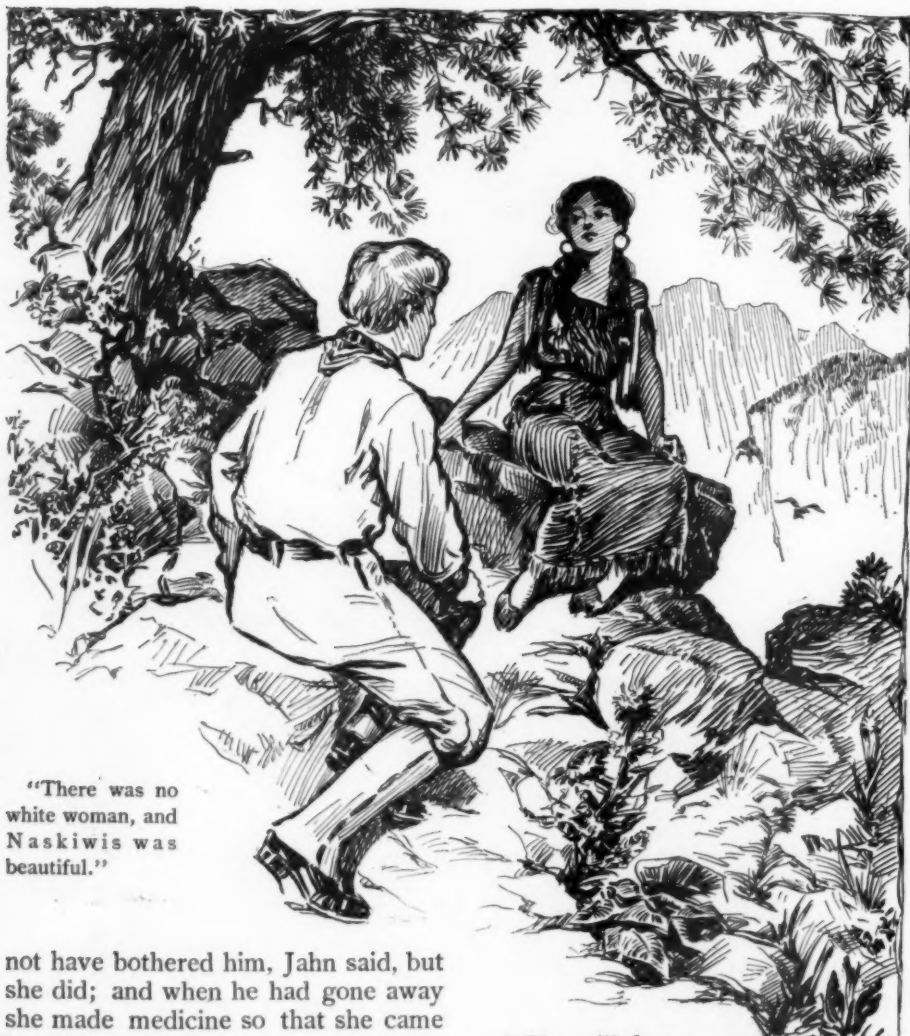


"I left him sitting there."

The fair giant was a creature of surprises; simple and yet most complex. The blue eyes were the eyes of a man who slept, and ate, and had his being; but in Jahn's existence many interests had jostled each other, and he had read much from the book of life.

I looked at the Madonna as Jahn spoke of Naskiwis. She was possessed of eager interest; our friend's candor precluded any thought of unworthiness.

All the tribe knew Naskiwis should



"There was no white woman, and Naskiwis was beautiful."

not have bothered him, Jahn said, but she did; and when he had gone away she made medicine so that she came in spirit and sat beside him and worried him much.

I almost suspicioned that the Swede was imposing upon our credulity, but that was impossible; he was in earnest.

He said: "Sometimes when I am alone in my shack she comes and makes mischief—abuses me; and trouble always comes soon after. O yes, I can see her quite plainly," he answered to a question from Aidine, "and I can hear her voice. She always knows just where I am," he continued.

"She will know that you are here with us to-night?" queried Aidine.

I could have sworn the pink in his cheek was lost for a minute as he answered, "I—I—I suppose she does."

"Can't you bring her here now?" asked the Madonna.

"My God—don't, don't! It is too late—I did not know it was so late," Jahn exclaimed, confusedly, as he fumbled at his watch. "We will go and smoke."

When we were together in the smoking-room, I could see this believer in wondrous things was troubled. During the day he had told me he was thirty-six; I had thought him not beyond thirty, his face was so boyish; now he was fifty.

The night before, my fellow-passenger had retired early. Now he sat and smoked pipe after pipe, and was a new Jahn, moody, and of little speech. Once as he was filling his pipe it clattered to the floor, and the tobacco lay like coarse dust.

"You see?" he said, holding up his strong-muscled arm. I did; it twitched like the limb of a man possessed of palsy.

"That is the medicine-making," he continued; "Naskiwis is making medicine—she heard—" Then he broke off and puffed fiercely, until we sat in a smothering blue haze.

I had a curiosity to know more of Jahn's hallucination—it could not be aught else; so I ventured to say, "You will see Naskiwis in the flesh to-morrow night; then you can scold her for troubling you."

"I shall not go to Heron Lake," he answered, with his usual straightforward simplicity.

"I thought—"

"Yes, yes," broke in Jahn, with nervous excitement; "I will tell you—I must talk. You don't mind?" he interrupted himself, pleadingly.

I laid my hand on his knee, and said, "Tell me about it, Olsen; it will do you good. If I can help you—"

"It wasn't my fault," he interrupted me again; "I saved the life of Naskiwis—it was nothing but a chance."

"Then she fell in love with you, naturally," I interjected.

"It wasn't my fault."

"And you?" I asked.

"There was no white woman there, and Naskiwis was beautiful."

I thought of the wicked eyes I had pictured.

"She haunted me as only an Indian can pursue. And then Many Bears, a young Indian, became jealous, and turned to hate the hearts of the Indians who were my friends. But one day I was strong enough to break away. Do you know what I did?" Jahn panted, as he thrust his hot face across to mine, and the blue eyes were deep violet with the madness that was over the man. "I took my mother's picture in my hand, so, and holding it before my eyes I ran like a stag that was afraid."

Then he threw his big body back and drew a long breath.

"I went away, but what use. I know what Naskiwis did. She went to the Nokum, and the Nokum, who is old in years and evil, taught her to make medicine against me, and I had no rest. Night and day Naskiwis was calling, calling, calling. Just as it was when I was at Heron Lake, her cry, 'Okama! Okama!' would waken me in the night when I slept; and sometimes she would sit there beside me."

"You fought against it?" I suggested.

"I prayed against it. But there is nothing in the world like this power of the medicine-making."

"And you were going back?"

"Yes. Naskiwis knew I must come."

"And now you are going past—you won't stop there?"

He shook his head, and his eyes were eyes of resolve.

"What broke the spell?" I asked.

"Aidine," he answered. "At first her face was like my mother's, and now it is like an angel's."

"You are tired," I said; "we would better turn in and sleep."

Jahn shook his head. "I can't sleep. You see, Naskiwis is calling,

calling; but I keep my eyes open and see only the sweet face of Aidine. To-morrow night we pass Heron Lake, and then I shall sleep a long time."

I left him sitting there and went to my berth. Though I thought the medicine-making but an idle fancy, the man's earnestness had unsettled me. Half an hour showed me the futility of trying to slumber, so I rose and went back to sit with him; perhaps another smoke would sooth my restlessness.

In the corner of the compartment, half-huddled against the window, sat an Indian girl.

"It is Naskiwis," Jahn said, quite simply, as I stood inside the curtain.

I lighted a cigar and sat down. I was wondering what it was. Had Jahn hypnotized me? There was magnetism enough in his physical excellence to influence a stronger than I; it might even be a trick; the train had stopped at a small town while I tossed in my berth.

The girl did not speak, neither did Jahn; so I sat silently trying to obliterate the unpleasant image. I drifted into a mental revolt; my mind struggled with this uncanny force that enthralled it. Why should I be compelled to see things that were not?

I was positive that if I were to stretch out a hand and seek to grasp this that Jahn was pleased to call Naskiwis, I should encounter nothing but the green plush cushions.

Why should the Swede's magnetic power be used to pervert my vision?

The oppressive silence was trying, and I wondered at my own reluctance to break it; but Naskiwis was Jahn's own trouble. I had nothing to do with her. If he could handle spirits and converse with them, I could not; but I could smoke, and I did, beyond all chance of further sleep.

About her shoulders was a blanket

of gaudy hue—red, and blue, and yellow—most unbecoming gorgeousness for a roving spirit. The blanket hid the girl's chin, but I could see the rest of her face; it was not the evil face I had seen in my restless fancies.

At last I said good night to Jahn and went back to my berth.

I think he did not come to bed at all. I did not hear him, but towards morning I did sleep a little.

In the daylight she had gone—there was no Naskiwis; but in Jahn's face was something that told me he was beyond trickery—that he was suffering.

All that day we did not speak at all of Naskiwis, nor of the medicine-making. The Swede talked a little to me of Aidine, and I knew there was conflict in his soul between the strange influence that was over him and the new light. Once I asked him if he would not lie down and have a nap, and he answered again, "We'll pass Heron Lake to-night; then I will sleep a long time."

We should reach Heron Lake at 2 A. M. I knew Jahn would sit up, and wondered if he would allow me to remain with him. I confess that I was as nervously interested as though I shared his belief.

All day Jahn was oppressed by the shadow of Heron Lake; it hung heavy on his spirits, and he was like a man under sentence of death.

When the night hours came I was glad. As they slowly followed each other into the past, I watched their going with thankfulness. After Heron Lake I also would sleep soundly and at length, I reflected, echoing Jahn's words. Never again would I become interested in a superstitious Swede.

At eleven o'clock everybody had retired except Jahn and myself. We sat in the smoking apartment, I trying to read, and my companion waiting in absolute idleness for—the pass-



"The Nokum, who is old in years and evil, taught her to make medicine against me."

ing of Heron Lake. At twelve we still sat thus. There was no conversation, nothing; not even the appearance of Naskiwis.

At one Jahn asked me if I would not sleep. I replied that I had a curiosity to see Heron Lake.

His face lighted up for an instant with a little wan smile of grateful recognition; he knew that I sat there in company.

After a time I looked at my watch. In twenty minutes we would have passed Heron Lake. A slight exhilaration at this thought seemed to make our present condition one of abject folly.

It was perhaps three minutes more when the black face of the porter peered through the door curtain. I started at the apparition.

"The lady passengers wanted to see Dr. Hapgood." I knew whom he meant.

I found Aidine's mother in a state of tearful excitement, and Aidine in all but hysterics. Her nerves had completely given way. I conjectured that the long journey was beginning to tell on her after her illness.

Aidine declared that a wicked face peered at her from between the curtains of her berth as she tried to sleep—she insisted with vehemence that it was not fancy—that she had seen it; such a wolfish, fierce face, cruel beyond description.

I got a soothing draught from my hand-bag and gave to her. She clung to me begging me not to leave her, it was not drugs she needed, it was protection.

I heard the hiss, a weary, long-

drawn-out sigh of the air-brakes, the crunch of checked wheels, the heave of the slackened train, and a moment's absence of motion; then, somewhere in the distance, a faint call of "All aboard"; the car vibrated with tremendous force, the iron screeched beneath it, and the swaying roll of the "Manitoba" told me that we were leaving Heron Lake and its nightmare behind. I gave a sigh of relief involuntarily. Aidine re-echoed it, and the pulse that had trembled fitfully in her cold wrist as I held it commenced to beat in stronger unison.

"The draught has soothed you?" I asked.

"I feel better," she answered; "oh, it was horrible—horrible! but I am better now."

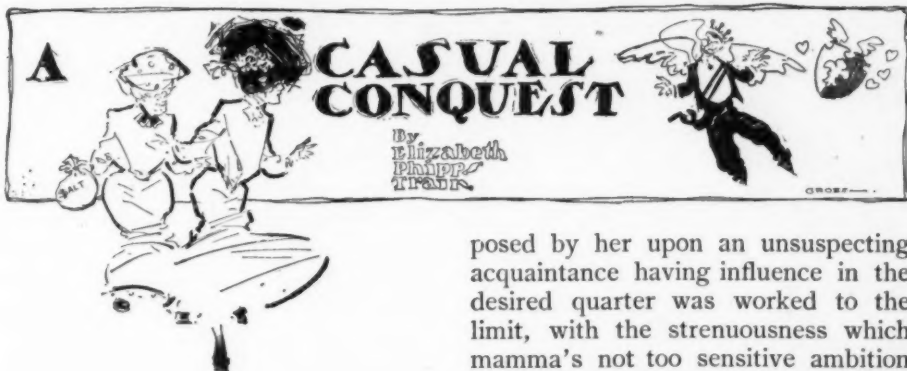
Presently a sleepy quiet brought a listless droop to the wondrous dark eyes; nodding to her mother I slipped away, and went back to congratulate Jahn.

He had spoken truthfully; he was lying on the seat asleep. "After we have passed Heron Lake I will sleep a long time," he had said.

He was so comfortable it seemed a folly to disturb him; perhaps if I wakened him he might not sleep again.

I, too, slept like a log. It was daylight when I was wakened by the porter; he was calling me in a choked voice.

I found the beautiful fair Jahn lying on the sofa, almost as I had left him. But he had spoken truth—"After Heron Lake I will sleep a long time"—for he was dead.



Isn't it odd from what remote causes our present actions spring? If it had not been for the operation of certain mental processes in the brain of somebody centuries ago, which resulted in the invention of those "devil's picture-books" which have become one of the forces of social life, I should not to-day be seeking to introduce myself (under a *sobriquet*, *bien entendu*) and my experiences to an editor from motives of financial expediency. In other words, I have been awfully bitten at bridge, and it has occurred to me to try to recoup myself by licking into readable shape some of the funny things which have capped various milestones in my social progress with grinning masks.

One of the most amusing of these owed its origin to mamma's successful accomplishment of an endeavor to secure me an invitation to a house-party at Giltedge, at a time when the whole American press, from Maine to California, from Tampa to Ogdensburg, was agog over the fact that the Van Gilders were to have the honor of entertaining the Duc de Dépensier, a blood cousin of the Duc d'Orléans, and a not unlikely heir to that nebular hypothesis, the French throne, should a reactionary temper assert itself in that variable quantity, French politics.

I have never dared press mamma for revelations concerning the wires she pulled to effect this result. But I am sure that any obligation ever im-

posed by her upon an unsuspecting acquaintance having influence in the desired quarter was worked to the limit, with the strenuousness which mamma's not too sensitive ambition is wont to bring to bear upon such efforts. I tell her that her motto should be, Cast your civilities in certain quarters in the hopes that they shall return to you after many days.

The result once obtained, we strained our nerves and not too abundant resources to make me fit and give me a proper setting-out. And mamma came down to the station to see me off, and to plant in Julie's mind a final injunction to hold her tongue in the servants' hall, and not become our biographer for the edification of that modern star-chamber.

The journey from New York to Giltedge is of twenty-four hours' duration, and our train was due to leave at 3 P. M. Mamma had engaged for me a whole section, and for Julie half a section in the car behind. We got to the station in more than good season, and Julie and the footman established me and my impedimenta in my place, while mamma remained outside to attend to the luggage, considering that it had cost her too much to be left to the discretion of Martin.

Scarcely had I arranged myself, with bag, dressing-case, umbrellas, golf-sticks, wraps, et cetera, handily disposed about me, however, when mamma came rushing—yes, the word is not misapplied; mamma is a large body, and moves with a considerable ponderosity, it is true; but then so is a bull ponderous, and yet he is said to rush into the arena—well, then,

mamma came rushing into the car, breathing like a bellows, and with importance, heavily underscored by satisfaction, written large all over her face.

"Gwladwys, Gwladwys, dear," she puffed, beckoning me aside, "come here a moment. Julie, and you, Martin, gather up Miss Struyver's things and take them into the rear car. Tell the porter to show you section 17. Now, Gwladwys."

We fell away from the servants a couple of paces, and mamma laid one hand on her panting bosom and the other on my shoulder.

"My dear child," she gasped, in a tone of solemn, if hurried, excitement, "what do you think! *He is on this train.* I have seen him! [A heavenly vision could not have elicited a more reverential vocal treatment.] I was conversing with the conductor when he approached—such a charming man—so distinguished!—followed by his servant with such an array of hand luggage, the most superb traveling outfit! He addressed the conductor with such a manner—royalty itself—I might have been thin air. He broke right in as if he didn't even see me—such splendid arrogance! And with such a delicious accent! Was this the train for Giltedge? he asked, and which carriage did his *billet* indicate? My dear! Such good fortune! The car back of this. I followed him in, and what do you think! His seat is directly opposite Julie's! Did you ever hear anything like it? I call it simply providential. Gwladwys, let me see your stockings, quick."

I have tried to train my brain to work in sympathy with mamma's cerebrations, but I am never able to follow her reasoning processes to their conclusions. I gazed at her now in helpless bewilderment. What in the world had my stockings to do with the excitement under which she was labor-

ing! She shook my shoulder impatiently.

"Quick," she cried, "let me see your feet. There's no time to lose. A Frenchman thinks more of a woman's feet than he does of her face. Ah-h-h!" Her voice made an ascending scale, and at sight of the objects I disclosed, ran off the keyboard. "Those hideous things!" She looked for a moment completely undone. Then, craned her head over her bosom's amplitude and surveyed the face of her watch. "Wait!" she cried. "There is time, I do believe. Gwladwys, stay here till I return."

In five minutes she was back. She carried a small fur shoulder-cape that Julie had packed in one of my trunks, and as she delivered it to me I felt the bulge of heels wrapped in it.

"I tipped the brakeman to let me into the baggage-car, found the trunk, and got them out," she gasped, in broken intervals. "Immediately the train starts go into the dressing-room and change. Now, come. There's no time to waste."

"But, mamma," I said, "what—"

She turned the eye of a martinet upon me. I know that eye.

"You are to take Julie's seat and she is to have yours," she remarked, with an air of finality.

"But," I ventured to remonstrate, "there is only half a section—"

She regarded me as Napoleon in the midst of his triumphs might have regarded a soldier who complained of the privations of the battle-field.

"A half-section is better than no Duc," she paraphrased, with the smile of one holding a remonstrance beneath contempt, and as we had reached the threshold of the rear car, she changed her bustling gait to the leisurely tread of one on whose movements Time himself is disposed to wait, and sailed forward to where, wondering and uncertain, Julie and

Martin stood, encumbered with luggage, and awaiting her instructions.

There might have been no one else in the car from the air of detachment with which mamma installed me in my seat and looked about her. She certainly has the grand manner down to a fine point. Martin she dismissed to await her outside, and Julie, to the section which I had deserted. A glance satisfied her that her Duc was where her benevolent providence had directed him to be, and in the brief conversation that time permitted us, she managed to let fall, several times, quite distinctly, though with apparent carelessness, the names of our prospective hosts and their residence.

When the porter, whom she had already well tipped—(mamma believes in tips. She says they are to worldly serenity what small virtues are to heavenly grace—little expenditures that anticipate comfortable returns)—came into the sleeper and obsequiously informed her that the train was about to start, I accompanied her to the door and took leave of her on the car platform. As she laid an affectionate kiss upon my chiffon veil, she murmured: "Good by, dear child. Isn't he charming, darling? So French! Such an air." Her last words to me were a solemn and stringent injunction not to fail to change my shoes and stockings *at once*.

It was the least I could do to advance the campaign she had taken such trouble to initiate, and I immediately carried out her instructions, admitting, after accomplishing them, that the change was certainly an improvement. My feet are, well, not bad to look at, and when I had dressed them in the openwork silks and high-heeled patent-leathers that mamma had furnished, I didn't see why any nian, especially any Frenchman, seated opposite them should care much about the outside scenery.

When I returned to my seat, advantage immediately allied itself with mamma's wishes. There was no footstool apparent for my use, and



"My feet are not bad to look at."

like a well-disciplined campaigner, I at once began a series of vague movements, calculated to call attention to the fact that something was lacking to my comfort, and suggesting that aid, delicately proffered, would not be unwelcome.

Solicitude at once took possession of my neighbor across the way, whom I now, for the first time, allowed myself to inspect.

He was a short, large man, dressed in the extreme of French taste. His dark hair was worn *retroussées*, and his mustache and imperial were both waxed to the vanishing-point. His feet were *très bien chaussées* and rivaled my own in size and shapeliness, except on the inner side of each, below the instep, a bulge proclaimed an affliction, which should, but alas, does not, appeal to one's sympathy. For some unexplained reason the thought of a bunion always inclines a non-sufferer to mirth.

The ducal linen shone, as did several rings adorning the immaculate hands, the blunt finger-tips of which indicated, according to palmists, possession of the artistic temperament. He had good teeth, a fine, somewhat florid complexion, and held himself with a certain air of consequence, usually perceptible in persons conscious of worldly distinction. He rose to my lure by searching out, and proffering for my use, the footstool with which his own section was provided.

"Pardon, mademoiselle," he said, politely, "you seek something, is it not? A tabouret perhaps? Permit that I have the honor of offering—"

I thanked him with reserve, not too discouraging, however, and rewarded his courtesy by permitting him a liberal glimpse of the objects of mamma's solicitude, after I had comfortably established them on the hassock. With those openworks and patent leathers to urge him on, he could not help following up his advantage. How could he? In a couple of moments he spoke again.

"It makes very warm in your American carriages, mademoiselle; you do not find it, no?" he hazarded, with an ingratiating smile.

"We like to feel ourselves what we call 'a warm people,' " I returned, wishing that his knowledge of our

idiom could have permitted him to appreciate the neatness of the rejoinder. "Monsieur is French?"

"I have the honor," he replied, complacently. And then I thought it well to let our further acquaintance languish for a while, so I opened my book, which chanced to be "Thaïs," and allowed him to enjoy my profile, in which I have confidence, in silence.

His continued gaze, however, soon made me nervous. My lids flickered up every now and then, and allowed our eyes to meet. I tried to prevent it, but what will you? *Noblesse oblige*. The scrutiny of a Duc is constraining, and not to be avoided like that of a commercial traveler. By some accident of careless handling, my book suddenly slipped from my fingers and fell to the floor, directly in front of those beautifully varnished feet.

He offered some criticism of the book as he returned it, at the same time suggesting that perhaps I spoke French. I admitted the fact. He drew a deep breath of satisfaction, and asked if it would be too great an indiscretion to desire me to play for a few moments the part of the Good Samaritan, and refresh a starving wayfarer with the sound of his own vernacular. I hesitated.

He offered indorsement of his request. He had heard madame, the lady who had installed me in my seat, mention Giltedge. Since we were bound for the same destination, might it not be permitted? I affected great surprise.

"*Monsieur allait à Giltedge, vraiment?*"

French is such a facile tongue. Before I realized it, I was embarked in the smooth current and carried into a full flood of a swift dialogue confined to generalities. Well, after that, the thing was almost too easy. Before we reached Philadelphia I was convinced that if I could only recon-

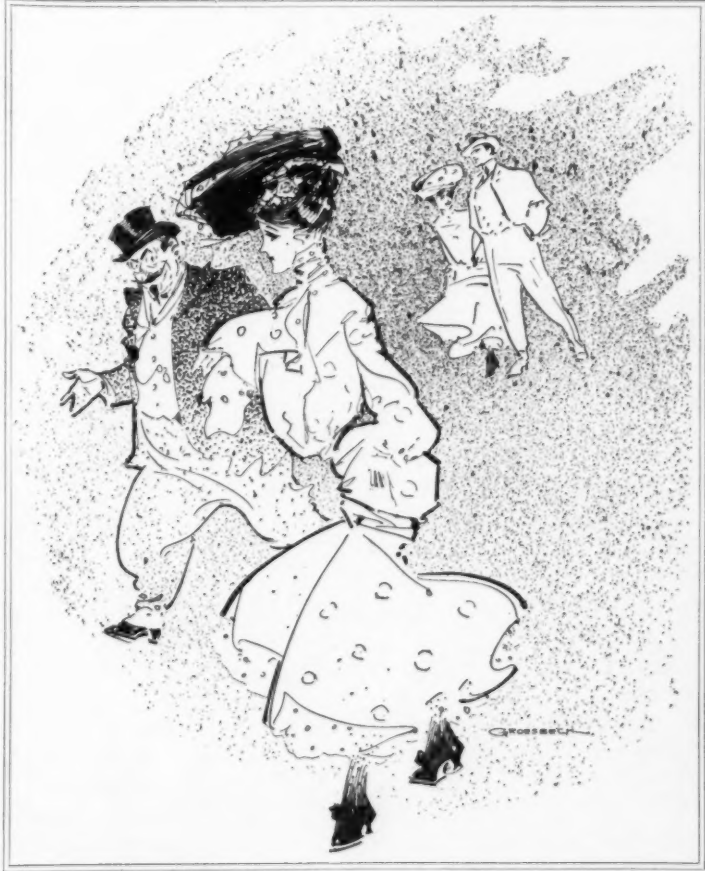
cile myself to those too obvious joints I might, by simply speaking the word, ally myself with one of the proudest families of France.

In that brief conversation which had antedated her leave-taking, mamma had suggested that, rather than occupy during the night my half-section, I should go forward and take the lower berth in Julie's whole one. Aided by my maid, I made the transfer while my new acquaintance was enjoying his after-dinner cigarette in the smoking-compartment, and we did not meet again until the next morning, after Julie had repaired the ravages made in my appearance by a night in a sleeper. I was late in rising, and the car was quite made up when I returned to it.

The ducal appearance had fallen off several points during the night. There were heavy shadows under the Frenchman's eyes, and the glory of his linen had departed. In fact, his shirt looked as if it had been slept in. His man had brought him a *petit déjeuner* of coffee and rolls, and these he was in the act of consuming.

Perceiving me, he rose with more

gallantry than grace, his *embonpoint* being but scantily accommodated between the seat and the little temporary table on which his breakfast was disposed, and bowed profoundly; then asked if I would not allow his man to



"The idea of fresh air and exercise was tempting."

serve me with some of the coffee made from his own stock and with the paraphernalia without which he never traveled.

"I am a little *gastronome*, *mademoiselle*," he remarked, with the complacent smile of an epicure, who regards indiscriminate appetite with contemptuous pity, "and you may—I say it without vanity—trust yourself safely to my recommendations."

I thanked him and declined, saying that I had already had a grape-fruit, two glasses of milk, a steak with Julienne potatoes, and I didn't know how many rolls.

I think the admission was unwise. It seemed to me thereafter that I appeared to exercise over him rather the fascination of a monster than the charm of that fairest thing in creation, a young and beautiful woman. Still, his attentions did not diminish, and it was so apparent that I held him in thrall of some kind that I was almost afraid he would ask the size of my dot before we reached Giltedge.

My goodness! when I look back upon that journey and the running I made—well, this isn't the place to dwell on that. It's superfluous to the narrative.

About noon we stopped at a way-station to take on water. Many of the passengers descended to stretch their cramped limbs, and Julie appeared to ask if I would not like to follow their example. The idea of fresh air and exercise was tempting and I assented.

Among the numerous patrolling passengers, I particularly observed one very good-looking young fellow, who passed and repassed us with suspicious frequency and rather obvious intention. Once or twice I intercepted intelligent glances exchanged between him and Julie. My maid is an awfully pretty girl and quite as *comme il faut* as her mistress. Evidently she, too, was beguiling the tedium of the journey. I made some remark, presently, about the young fellow, whereat she, coloring, admitted that he was her traveling neighbor and bound for Giltedge, in the capacity of valet, she imagined, as he was a foreigner. Being no spoil-sport, I soon thereafter returned to my seat and allowed Julie that opportunity which, under similar circumstances, I

myself should have desired. The last glimpse I had of my maid assured me that she had profited by my consideration. She and her attractive young man were disappearing, probably to inspect the view on the other side of the station, around the corner.

At lunch-time I waited in vain for Julie to come to accompany me into the dining-car. Finally, much annoyed, I sent the porter to fetch her. He returned, saying her seat was vacant and the conductor thought that she and one of the other passengers had got left behind at Raxworth, the watering-station. For a moment I was much troubled. Then "it is an ill wind, etc.," I bethought me, as mamma's Duc leaned forward, and with great *empressement*, begged to place himself and his man completely at my disposal.

So it was that, it being obviously impossible for me to go into the dining-car alone, or with the Duc, unchaperoned, he and I had luncheon together in our own car, served by his man. It was agreeable enough, and I had the happy consciousness of feeling that I was acting precisely as mamma would have liked, but I must say that I have had more ripping times in my life, and before we reached Goulding, the nearest station to Giltedge, those protuberances on the ducal feet had actually got on my nerves.

Traps and servants galore in the Van Gilder livery awaited our arrival. My Duc assisted me from the car and his man took my small luggage in charge, the porter burdening himself with their things. On the platform I was at once taken possession of by a footman, who, inquiring my name, without allowing me time even to thank my Duc, had me seated in a waggonette in a jiffy.

"You bring a maid, madam?" he asked, as I handed my checks to him.

"Yes," said I, "but she has got left behind at Raxworth."

"Ah," said he. I don't think there was really in the man's tone the significance I imagined. "With the Duc de Dépensier."

"What?" I cried.

"Monsieur le Duc telephoned the circumstances to Giltedge," he explained. "We expect him — and doubtless your woman, too, madam — on the next train."

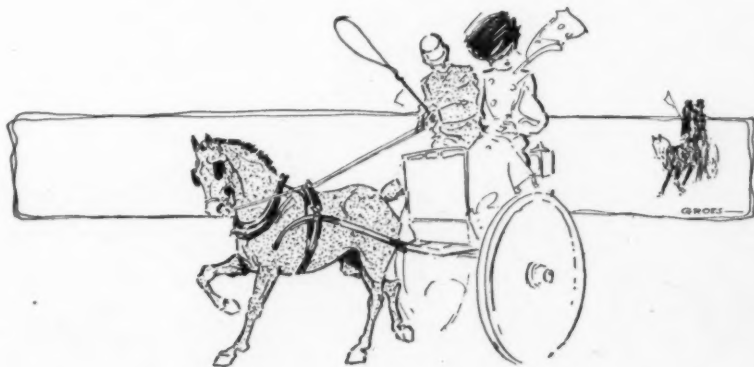
I sat for a moment, overwhelmed. Then I chanced to catch sight of my late conquest being whirled away in a T-cart. I pointed to him.

"Who is that person?" I asked.

The footman craned his head sideways.

"That, madam," said he, "is our new chef, Monsieur LeCoq."

We drove on. I never relished a single morsel during that entire visit.



The Bankers' Matinee

BY CY WARMAN

Author of "The Story of the Railroad," "The White Mail," etc.

A rude theater, improvised in an empty store-room; a rough stage, floored with bridge plank; upon the stage a strong steel safe like those used in country banks, and an expert cracksman to crack it. The principal performer is not a robber—that is, a burglar. He is the representative of the Startler Alarm Company. This company undertakes to put intricate and elaborate alarm systems into banks and other buildings, which, when disturbed by midnight prowlers, will wake and warn the sleeping city, as an æolian harp wakes and sings in the rising wind.

The repertoire of the "Startler"

depends altogether upon the amount of money the bank, village, or city is willing to give up. A cheap one will cause an electric bell to ring in the room over the bank where the cashier sleeps. A better one will sound a gong in the street. A still more elaborate system will sound a number of gongs, and if those interested could spare the price, no doubt the company could provide a system that, in addition to sounding the gongs, would ring the fire, church, and school bells, and assemble the Vigilance Committee (which is an important part of the system) in the public square. However, the man had not come to show

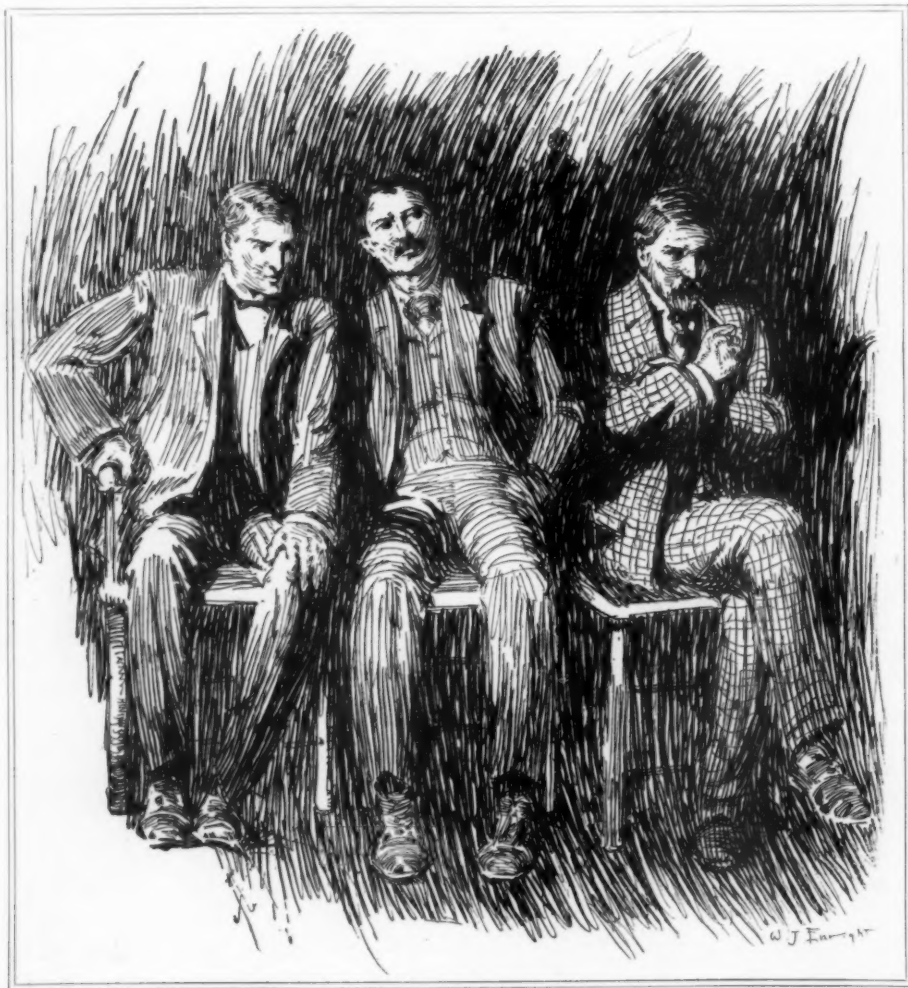
the system at this performance, but the necessity for it.

The day was dark in the smoke-veiled city. The lamps had been turned on, lighting the theater dimly, for the thing must be realistic. The struggling robber—the real professional burglar—must often work in absolute darkness, so this make-believe robber must not have too much light.

Presently the swinging storm-doors began to cry and moan, as the audience began to assemble. A man in

morning dress received each guest at the door, smiled, and waved him forward and to a seat. They were all men, and nearly all bankers. There were millionaires among them, poor, unhappy millionaires, who had come through the storm and snow and sleet to see a man melt a hole in a safe, and incidentally, to hear the man tell of the wondrous workings of the "Startler" alarm, which was to guard the millionaire's millions and give him a rest.

The show had not been advertised



"A detective, a burglar, and a struggling author."

in the regular way. A neat card had been mailed to prominent banking houses in the city and to country bankers round about, so that every man present was intensely interested in the performance. There were bank presidents, cashiers, paying tellers and clerks, all waiting eagerly for the show to begin.

In the front row of chairs there were three men who were not bankers: a detective, a burglar, and a struggling author, who sees the inside of a bank only once in a great while, when he goes in to cash a check that comes to him from some one of the magazines.

Presently, when about half of the chairs had been filled, a nervous man in a fur coat pounded the floor with a heavy stick, after the way of the gallery god, and immediately a man came from a rear room, leaped lightly upon the stage, hit the safe a rap or two with a hard hammer, and asked any man in the audience who might doubt the tangibility of the strong box to come forward and examine it.

"Hit it where you are going to burn it," said a man in the front row, and the showman did so. That seemed to satisfy the company. At all events no one went up to test the armor, and the showman went on with the show.

Of the apparatus, there was a switch-board to begin with, a positive electric wire attached to a carbon, clamped to a stick, a negative wire attached to the safe, an asbestos-lined sheet-iron box with a hole in the center, also attached to the safe, and a man who knew how to work the machinery.

The metal did not melt as rapidly as the expert had predicted, but it surely melted, and in a short while a small hole appeared in the face of the safe.

The man said it would be foolish to

make another hole, for if one hole could be made, any number of holes of any size could be made, and the audience consented silently to what the man said.

Now, to guard against these enterprising burglars, who have only to harness an electric light wire and go to work (and there are electric lights wherever there are civilized men and money), the Startler Alarm Company was prepared to put in a system that would call the people to arms. As a matter of fact, the "Startler" could not make them fight, but it would wake 'em up, and that was something.

Past and very recent events had established the fact that in certain localities the people showed no burning desire to go out in the dead of night and do battle with strange, bad men. At Coffeerville, Kansas, the populace had turned out *en masse* to meet a party of highwaymen, but out in the Southwest robbers do not wait for the cover of night and then sneak in by the back way. They dash right up to the front door, dismount, collect the cash, and ride gayly away, their wide hats waving in the summer winds. But upon this occasion the citizens who had been unable to get a dollar from the bank without gilt-edged security objected to this business. They naturally felt ashamed of having a company of men, who were almost strangers in the town, come in and take what they wanted without a fight. And so the Coffeervillans did battle, and when it was all over and the smoke had cleared away, leading citizens and prominent road agents lay dead in picturesque confusion all about the place, and some of them far out in the sunflowers that fringed the town. The showman mentioned the Coffeerville affair, he said, to show that with a "Startler" the people would always be warned, day or night,

and be in shape to put up as good a fight as the robbers could show. He did not mention the recent robbery in an Illinois village, where a frightened Dutchman had wakened an entire township, and the whole company had waited patiently for the dawn of day, when they assembled at the bank to hear the news of the robbery.

Presently, when the performance was at an end, the people passed out. The banker and the burglar each went back to the even tenor of his way. But the millionaire—poor, unhappy millionaire—carried a new fear away with him. In the old days, by the old ways, he could at least hear his chest going to pieces, but with this newfangled device he might slumber sweetly the whiles his safe melted and ran out over his carpet. It worried the millionaire.

At 1 A. M. of the following morning, in that small hour when all respectable people are supposed to be in bed, the detective was walking softly in the shadow of the big building wherein had been the "Bankers' Matinée" the day before. At the close of the performance he had managed to loosen the fastening on one of the back windows and to that window he now made his way. To his surprise the detective found the window open. He listened for a moment, and then stepped inside. In a little while he had made his way to the basement, and a moment later had the blinding light of a dark lantern flashed in his face. Instantly the detective flashed his light on the flasher, and found that the man in the cellar had a gun in his other hand. The detective had a gun also.

"Horse and horse," said the man.

"Put down that gun," the detective replied.

"Hello, ol' Never Sleep, that you?"

"Yes, that's me. What you trying to do, swipe the outfit?"

"No. What *you* trying to do, learn the business?"

"I know it already."

"Sit down," said the man, turning his bull's-eye upon an empty cracker box, and the famous detective and the notorious burglar sat side by side in the dark cellar and discussed the show and the probable importance of the new system of robbing banks.

"What do you think of the layout?" asked the detective.

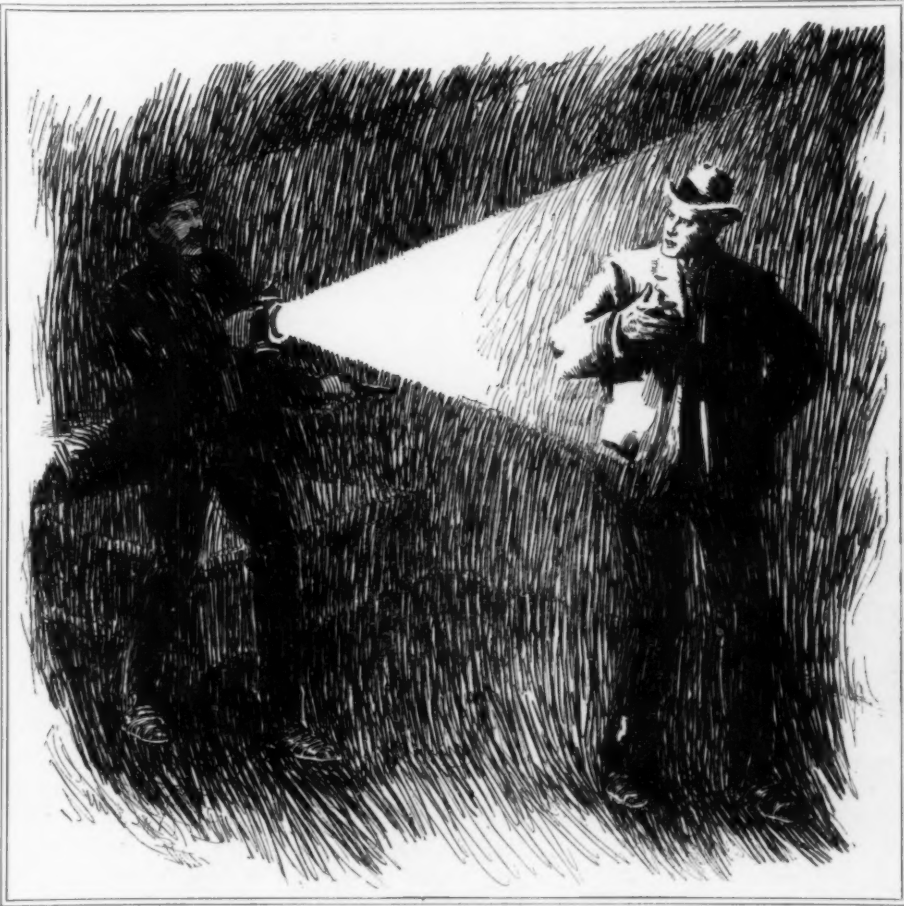
"I'm not in the habit of giving expert testimony gratis, or revealing professional secrets, but now that you are here, and doubtless to investigate, I'll save you the trouble. It's a good thing; that is, it would be a good thing if bankers would build their banks on the banks of streams, or fit up their basements as this one is fitted up. Otherwise it's going to be a great burden to beginners, and to burglars working on small capital. To do this act properly a man wants a private car, same as a theatrical star, to carry his outfit. An operator will be obliged to remain in each town three or four days, running up hotel bills, which he must necessarily jump, and so get a bad name, to put up his plant. You see the ordinary electric-light current will not do the work. I tried it in Creede in the boom days, and successfully, too, but I found afterwards that the safe was a big paper imitation vault that "Doc" Beggs had used in his bunco bank at Denver. But the ordinary light wire won't touch an iron safe."

"Then the system is not a success?"

"No. There's too much machinery. Over against that wall, whence comes the song of the running brook, there is a huge tank, or rather a trough, and in that trough are miles of resistance coils, carefully packed out of sight, and there are tons of other paraphernalia, to say nothing of wiring the building, which is apt to

attract the notice of the employees. No," the veteran burglar added, with the faintest sigh of regret, "it won't

his business, climbed up the dark stairway and out into the wind-swept street. At the first turning the de-



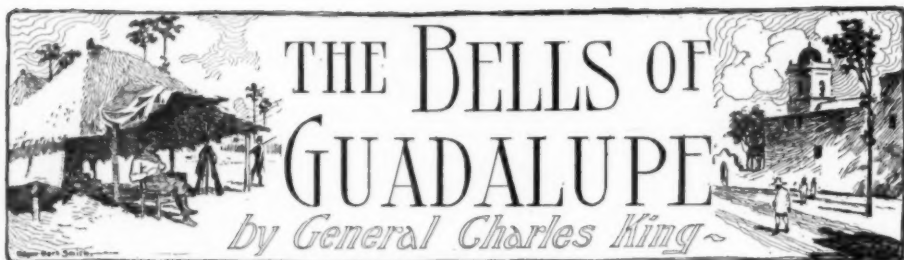
"Hello, ol' Never Sleep, that you?

work. With the exception of the paper bank at Creede, no bank has ever been robbed by electricity."

So the two men who had gone forth at the dead of night, each in quest of information that would be useful in

tective called a cab and said good night.

"Good morning," called the crook, and then, being a poor man, he walked slowly and thoughtfully back to his humble home.



High above the grim, gray walls they hung, perched in their ornamental belfry. High above the swirling waters of the Pasig, the grim, gray walls stood sentry over miles of varied landscape, perched on the summit of the rock of Guadalupe. Midway between Manila and the thronging island towns at the foot of the Laguna, the grand old church, with its attendant school and convent, had long been the pride of the priesthood, the especial joy of his eminence, the archbishop. Its great library contained hundreds of volumes written and illuminated in by-gone centuries. Its chime of bells, sweet and silvery, had been bought by the hoarded savings of the faithful whose homes, in one long, narrow street, thickly lined the left bank of the river, almost to the neighboring *barrio* of San Nicolas on the east, and quite to the sharp dividing line of San Pedro Macati, toward the westward metropolis.

Time was when San Pedro and San Pedro's big church dared to contest with Guadalupe the palm of wealth and grandeur, but that was very long ago. San Pedro's church had fallen into secular use, first as hospital and then as barracks, in the days when the Tagal revolted against his Spanish master. San Pedro's church walls had echoed to the brazen notes of the Spanish bugles, and then in turn to the softer tones of the Filipino clarion. San Pedro's sanctuary had eventually become headquarters for the division of Pio del

Pilar—major general of the insurgent army.

San Pedro had lost its sanctity, but not so Guadalupe. Priest-blessed and liberally besprinkled with Pasig holy water, the little brown soldiers of Pilar's devoted command had marched forth that starlit February evening to take part in the forthcoming assault on the impudent, insolent "Yanco" invaders of their sacred soil, and toward noon the following day came drifting back, savagely swearing and fighting, ever resisting, yet invariably giving way to dash after dash of the men of California and Idaho, for the Tagal had badly burned his fingers in front of Santa Ana. Two hundred of Ricarte's brigade alone lay dead before the village walls. Prisoners and wounded to the number of four hundred more had fallen into the hands of the big, blue-shirted enemy when he finally sprang forward in spirited counter-attack, and once started, he never stopped until he had driven the amazed little soldiers, despite the miraculous, mysterious powers of the *anting-anting* each wore in his breast, through and beyond the thick woods that circled Guadalupe. When the sun went down, the evening of the 6th of February, not a Tagal man-at-arms remained in sight west of the big church looming on that rocky height.

The pursuit of the little brown men had taken the rush to the upper river, and the single company left behind to guard this ecclesiastical stronghold found the premises but empty shells.

Priests, monks, nuns, and villagers all had fled, and the vesper chime of the silvery bells that warm, dusty, summer-like evening in mid-February was rung by the vandal hands of lusty lads from Idaho, and fell mainly on alien, heretic, unheeding ears. Captain Lodge and his men were listening forward to the distant crack of rifles as the pursuit rolled on, and looking backward toward the level plain of Manila.

A grewsome sight that, for here, there, and everywhere, in flame and smoke, the native huts or the pretentious Spanish-built houses, in whose cellars Ricarte's wounded had taken refuge, were now being swept from the face of the earth. Their walls had been the rendezvous of insurgent riflemen who had shot down our surgeons, stewards, and wounded in the thick of the battle. One whole village, close to the edge of the waters and under the nose of the patron saint of Guadalupe, could not even wait for night to come to add its share to the fireworks. After two Red Cross nurses and one red-faced news-gatherer had been fired upon from ambush while driving through the town, Lodge started a house-to-house search for the would-be assassins, and caught three of them, in a cornered-rat scrimmage, in the Presidente's parlor, and half a dozen more in other sections of the *barrio*. There was no roof left to shelter possible others when the sun went down. The long line of bamboo houses had gone snapping up in smoke.

But no man thought of harming the church and the adjacent convent. They, at least, were far above the level of the town—and suspicion—and so it happened a few days later that white-robed natives began to appear from the bamboo thickets and the intricate pathways through the timber. They were "*amigos—todos*

amigos," as they assured Lodge. They deplored Aguinaldo's rash assault on his best friends, the noble Americans. They had come to vespers, nothing else, and were disheartened to find no officiating priest. Don Sebastiano Torres—a little Tagal in snowy white—offered to go fetch one.

"From where?" demanded Lodge, suspiciously.

"God knows," answered Torres, piously. "Yet will there be one; the Blessed Virgin will direct his footsteps."

And at sundown he was back again, a holy father in shovel hat and soutane in close attendance, a Filipino boy bearing a canvas-covered valise of basket-work containing the priestly vestments. The holy father had been on duty, he said, with the wounded and dying in the villages down stream, but rejoicefully he came to conduct the evening services, and Lodge let him go. In ten minutes other little brown men came, in obsequiously saluting squads, for the soft air was thrilling with the silvery summons of the bells of Guadalupe.

Lodge scratched his head and looked queer. The General had bidden him treat all natives religiously and devoutly disposed with scrupulous courtesy, and Lodge would do nothing to undo his general's faith in him. All the same it struck Lodge as strange that, from a countryside apparently swept bare of Tagalogs when the brigade chased Pilar up the Pasig, there should now step forth in smiles and snowy white such numbers of little brown men—*todos amigos*.

"I'm betting my bottom dollar every one of 'em has got his uniform and Mauser *cachéd* in the bamboo, and a bolo in his breeches," growled Lodge, "and some fine evening they'll turn the vesper call into 'commence firing,' but what can I do?"

The General, with two of his staff, came riding back from the far front in the early morning, and Lodge showed him the swarm of would-be worshipers, demurely assembling from every direction. The General whistled softly to himself and said he would see that it was reported at once to the Governor General at the *ayuntamiento* in town.

Hats in hand and bowing profoundly, three of the pious islanders came forward and begged audience of the brigadier. Might they be permitted to restore the ladder from the tower to the lofty belfry? It had unaccountably disappeared. There was a wonderful view from that belfry if His Excellency but knew. One could see the whole sweep of country from Cavite on the bay at the southwest to Cainta and Taytay and the mountains northeastward, then back over the great city and forward over the island towns and the Laguna.

Now, Lodge had ordered that ladder removed because his Idaho lads would clamber to the belfry, and then the distant bamboo across the stream would begin to sputter and crackle, and Mauser bullets whistle about the bells, and Sergeant Prosser of Pocatello had been plugged through the cheek, and Corporal Carter would carry back to Boise a smashed elbow as a souvenir of his sightseeing. Lodge would have said "No," but the General said "Yes, certainly," and intimated that he should very much like to view the country from that lofty perch.

Three little brown men ran off toward the abandoned pottery in the back valley, and two of them reappeared in ten minutes with a stout bamboo ladder with which they clambered the broad stone stairway of the tower, and a dozen willing hands were speedily busy lashing it in place.

"Don't go up there, General!"

said Lodge, in vehement undertone, but the chief winked and said he was eager to see the panorama, and Lodge turned to and swore savagely as he saw him disappear, with a single aide, through the great open doorway.

"Fall in!" he ordered, and some forty of his company, lounging and napping along the stone wall overhanging the hillside, sprang to the stacked arms and silently took their places in ranks. Two little Tagals at the church door, noting this manœuver, quickly sidled inside. One of them chased aloft after the obsequious native escort of the American *jefe*; the other slipped behind the highly ornate altar and whispered to the good padre, and this ecclesiastic began to tremble as he hurriedly turned the key in the wooden backing of the holy altar. Then they all slunk away into the shadows of the cloisters and listened and looked aloft and waited.

Arrived, somewhat blown, at the top of the winding stone stairway, the General paused and looked about him. One aide-de-camp was with him; the other remained with Lodge below. Half a dozen natives, in snowy raiment and alluring smiles, bowed low and motioned toward the ladder. The Presidente, posing as spokesman, begged the General to ascend to the belfry and enjoy the view. The General, clad in khaki, bowed his thanks and went briskly, hand over hand, until his campaign hat was just level with the trap door, the glittering eyes of the natives following him. Yet one of them, quick and furtive, saw the aide-de-camp's hand go to the butt of his pistol, whereupon the Presidente felt a sudden pull at his sleeve. Bronx, the aide, later declared he could hear the swift beating of the Presidente's heart.

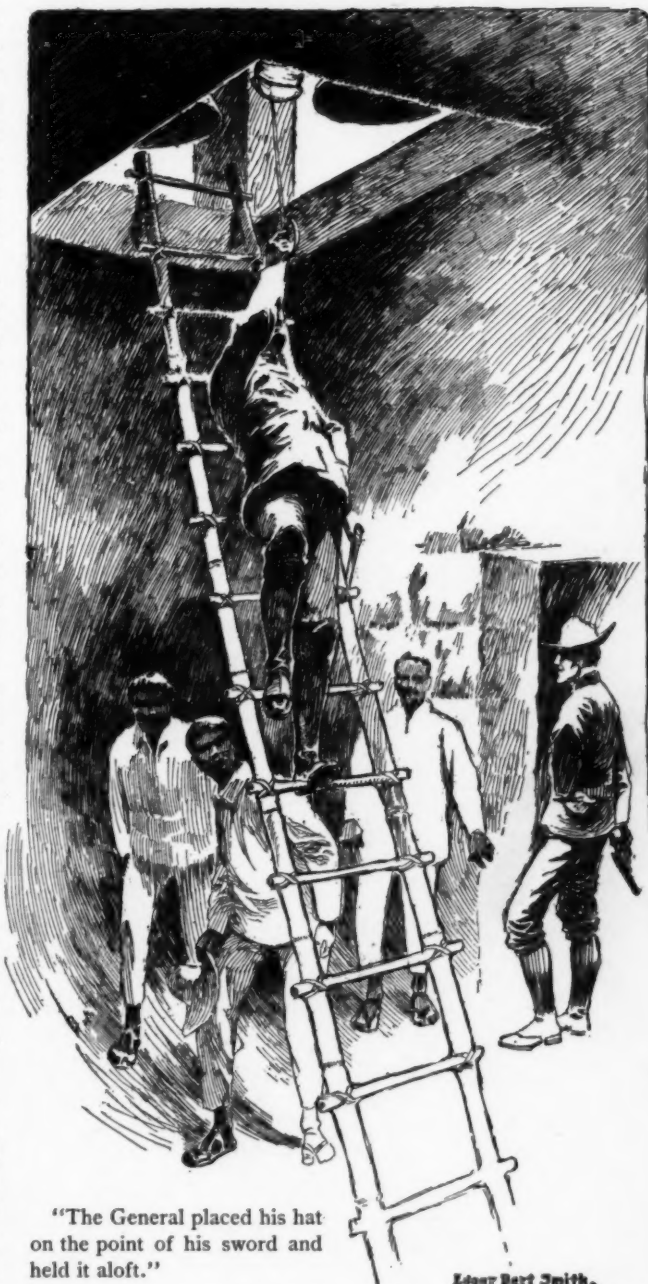
There was a moment of silence and suspense; then a sudden sensation,

for the General stopped at the uppermost rung, placidly drew sword, placed his hat on the point thereof, and held it aloft. Instantly there came a "spat," then "zip, spang, spang," and the bells of Guadalupe began to sing and hum as though forcible beaten by little steel hammers.

"Bronx," said the General, suavely, "you may arrest the Presidente," whereat, in a white avalanche, that official and his satellites shot tumultuously down the stone stairway, only to bring up in a heap in the broad vestibule below, for there were Lodge and his forty flannel-shirted Idahos. The Presidente was a prisoner.

Late that starlit night the homeless dogs along the Pasig began to howl with unusual vehemence, for a swift change had come over the scene. MacArthur's division, fighting northward along the Dagupan Railway, had need of reinforcements, and only in one way could the Governor General get them—by stripping Anderson's, then skirmishing far out to the south-east and south.

"Fall back to San Pedro Macati and send all but twenty companies,"



"The General placed his hat on the point of his sword and held it aloft."

Edgar Bert Smith.

clicked the mandate out to the front; and so it happened that when sunset came Guadalupe lay nearly a mile outside of the entrenched line on the left of Anderson's division, but still held

and garrisoned by a plucky little batch of blue-shirts, Lodge and his lads among them.

Saluted by the mournful howlings of the dogs, like so many shadowy specters, the little brown men of Pilar's division came gliding back through the bamboo, and by midnight Guadalupe was surrounded by its former parishioners, and three holy fathers, in shovel hat and soutane, were parleying with the guards. They wished to come inside and prepare the church for early morning service, and Lodge replied he reckoned there wouldn't be any service of that character, though there might be of another. The Presidente, for instance, ought to be hanged.

But good Padre Ildefonso, a graduate of the Jesuit College, and a fair speaker of English, ceased not his entreaty. Assuredly, at least, the noble Americans would permit no desecration of the holy altar. Assuredly not, answered Lodge—not

because he didn't think it would bear looking into, but because his orders required him to prevent desecration. For this reason the men had been excluded from the church proper, and were dozing or watching in the soft starlight without or under the archways of the cloister. All the same did Lodge take his lantern, and go scouting through the church and around the high altar, after a chat with the pickets at half-past twelve.

"Beyond question," said they, "the woods are full of 'em," and more were coming, or those dogs wouldn't be making that row up the river road. "Half you men get your guns and keep awake," said Lodge. "The other half go to sleep."

And so, without further alarm or disturbance of any kind, the night wore on until the faint gleam of dawn began to suffuse the eastern skies. Then, all on a sudden, from the lofty belfry there came a clangor of metal throats. All on a sudden, in



"'Force it open,' shouted Lodge."

wild note of alarm, began the bells of Guadalupe, and the bamboo thickets echoed with instant flash and crackle of surrounding musketry.

"Into the church, every man of you!" yelled Lodge, and led the way. "Take a dozen and nab the bell-ringers," he ordered a lieutenant. "Come on, the rest of you!" And with that he tore through the vestibule into the church, where, dim and ghostly in the faint light stealing through the eastward window, stood the high, gaudily painted altar, and two or three shadowy shapes were scurrying thither through the gloom.

"Halt!" yelled the foremost sergeant, ere his Springfield barked its loud challenge. "Halt! Halt!" were the echoing cries as Lodge and his leading men went bounding over the stone flooring, and in less time than it takes to tell it, the altar was surrounded and two trembling, livid Tagalogs, in priestly garb, were dragged from the shadows.

A wooden door had slammed some-

where, and a prodding bayonet revealed it in the backing of the altar. "Force it open!" shouted Lodge. "Whatever it was, it's the devil's own den now!"

And so it proved. A narrow stairway led down into a vault; the vault was stocked with Mauser and Remington ammunition; a passage led from the vault to the convent at the rear, and sandaled feet went scurrying back, pursued by Yankee brogans and bullets. In the white garb of peace, with rifles at hand and *bolos* secreted underneath the flowing *ropas*, four of the *todos amigos* were nabbed in a corner. A swarm of others were chased through the convent into the labyrinth of the bamboo. The secret of the sanctuary was unearthed, the attack repelled, and Lodge's supplementary report on its way to Manila before the rising sun. For the last time in their history—for what befell them is another story—had been heard the chimes of the bells of Guadalupe.



"Madame"

BY ELIZABETH ROBINSON

I congratulated myself, as the train pulled out of the Geneva station, upon my good fortune in securing a first-class



"My unwelcome companion."

compartment all to myself, and one, moreover, marked "For Ladies Only."

I turned back the dividing arms of the broad, softly stuffed seat, thus making a fine, long couch; disposed my various bits of baggage where they would be most convenient; arranged with care the little pillow in its fresh white case that I had hired at the station for this journey; took off my smart shirtwaist with its stiff col-

lar and cuffs, and donning a thin, white dressing-sack, I lay down on my easy couch, drawing close under my chin the large, light traveling-shawl that I always carry on all my journeys, short or long.

I rested for some time in great contentment, thinking over the delightful day I had spent in Chamonix, returning just in time to do justice to a good dinner in Geneva, and to catch the evening train for Paris.

"All nonsense," I reflected, "what people say about women traveling alone. Here am I in perfect peace and comfort, with not a soul to disturb me, and besides"—with the pride all women take in their economies—"I have, by taking this compartment, saved the several dollars extra that a regular sleeping compartment would have cost."

I was just composing myself to sleep, hoping not to awake until Paris was reached, when the train stopped at what looked to my sleepy eyes, a small and most unimportant station. To my sorrow and dismay the door of my compartment was thrown open, and a tall young woman entered somewhat hastily, an attendant porter throwing up on the rack an enormous traveling-bag.

The train was almost at once in motion, and now, being thoroughly awake, I looked carefully at my unwelcome companion as she divested herself of a voluminous brown silk dust-cloak, showing that she was dressed in a deep pink cotton frock, ruffled as to its skirt, and cut scandalously low, it seemed to my New England eyes, as to its throat.

A big picture hat with many black feathers and roses of every hue, like and not like to nature, was tenderly hung upon a hook. I was much interested to observe that in a far more intense degree the young woman reproduced my own rather unusual combination of dark eyes with fair hair. But while my eyes were just common-sized, ordinary, clear, black eyes, with, as a girl friend once told me in a pet, "about as much expression as boot buttons," my companion's were really wonderful, so large, so soft, true "liquid eyes," such as one sees in old paintings and engravings.

Her hair, unlike mine, which was, alas! beginning to take on the drab shade common to all light hair after childhood in America, was of the most brilliant yellow, which even to my unsophisticated eyes, showed plainly that art had greatly aided nature in producing such a vivid and surprising result.

I wondered lazily if a little of the "stuff" would do any harm to my own fair locks. The tiny white hands covered with lovely rings attracted my attention; also, the most gorgeous and elaborate golden chatelaine I had ever seen, which hung at the slender waist. I tried to count, while the wearer's attention seemed to be entirely engrossed by the French novel she quickly buried herself in, but the number of the fascinating trinkets was quite beyond my computing.

We journeyed some time in silence. Then my companion, glancing at my ungloved left hand, where, for a fancy of my own, I always, in traveling, wear a plain gold ring covered with one containing a solitaire diamond of small value, asked in French, "Madame is Swiss, perhaps?"

I do not speak French fluently, but generally I can make myself understood, can read with ease, possess a large vocabulary, and understand—

when in practice—any short sentences; but French rapidly spoken, especially by more than one person, might as well be ancient Greek for all I manage to catch.

I answered this inquiry, however, in French, saying that I was an American. She smiled, at once addressed me in very good English, and said that she had been in America herself, speaking in highly complimentary terms of that great country. But when I praised our system of railway travel—not referring to our ordinary sleeping-car arrangements, you may be sure—she grew quite indignant, and would not admit that there could be any comparison between the two, any doubt that the system in Europe was vastly superior in every least detail to that in America.

Even my murmured "palace and drawing-room cars" was received with a scornful sniff.

I was very angry, but kept silence. As she turned her face indignantly from me, I caught sight of a large, black mole high up on her left cheek, which shone like an old-time "patch" on her delicately colored skin.

She returned to her book, which had a title suggesting all kinds of French wickedness. In fact, I remembered taking up the same novel on the steamer in which I had crossed from America, and that a young Frenchman of my acquaintance quickly took it from my hand and dropped it overboard before I had read more than the title-page.

But "Madame," as I had begun to call her in my mind, was most certainly no young girl, and evidently quite emancipated, and she read page after page with absorbing interest and not the faintest glimmer of a blush.

I was beginning to get sleepy again. The terrible heat of Geneva, which is more like that of mid-summer in America than I have found elsewhere

in Europe, still filled the car, and distant thunder was heard. Tempests always make me drowsy, and I was fast falling asleep, when the train again stopped, and my companion, with a sharp glance at me, alighted.

Several minutes passed, and I began to think and hope she would miss the train, but just as it was about to move, the door of my compartment was violently pulled open and she jumped aboard, and to my horror and indignation, a man came with her.

Looking at me with a sweet smile, she said, "Madame will permit me to have my husband with me just to the next station, I am so timid in thunderstorms. We will not discommode Madame in the least."

I, the "madame" now addressed, was very much discommoded and very angry. I felt that it was a rank imposition, but I knew nothing I could do, and felt that perhaps it would be better to keep quiet to the next station, which I trusted was not far away, and then ask the guard or some official to see that the carriage "For Ladies Only" was no longer invaded by a man.

I drew my shrouding shawl closer about my face, but I was far too angry to sleep. The storm grew more and more violent. Such thunder I never heard before, and hope fervently never to hear again. "Heaven's artillery" it was indeed, and most powerful. The lightning was continuous.

As she had said, Madame was afraid in such storms. At any rate she made the wild, appalling commotion of the elements an excuse to sit very close to her husband, who tenderly supported her with one arm, often holding both her tiny hands in his otherwise disengaged hand.

I cowered under my shawl, shaking with terror at the fearful tumult raging outside, the intensity of which

seemed to rock the very cars themselves. I felt very far from home. Visions of the ample featherbed that had been my childish resort on similar occasions came to my mind. I felt terribly lonely. My head began to ache miserably, and getting from my near-by dressing-bag a bottle of bay rum, I dabbed a little on my forehead with my handkerchief.

I dozed a little now and then as the storm lulled. Once, upon feeling some one come near me, I opened my eyes and saw Madame's husband reaching for the huge bag that the porter had thrust into the rack over my head.

With half-closed eyes I watched with interest the next proceedings.

The bag proved to be a most sumptuously appointed dressing-bag, with bottles, brushes, glasses, combs, and articles of like nature, mounted in gold and studded with turquoises.

The man had thrown off the raincoat, whose turned-up collar, with the drawn-down soft hat, had partly hidden his features when he entered the compartment, and now I could see that he was both young and handsome, and as dark as Madame was fair.

I observed, too, with the keenness of the feminine eye for such points, that he looked somewhat younger than Madame. A dark mustache veiled a handsome mouth with fine teeth. His large eyes were alight with admiration as he looked on and assisted—as far as he was able—at the toilet that now took place.

Monsieur held the gilt hairpins as Madame let down the heavy masses of her corn-colored hair, watched earnestly as she arranged it, laughingly proffered the bottle from which she gave to the short curled locks about her face a brighter shade.

She rubbed some sort of perfumed unguent upon her face and throat,

wiped it off with a dainty cloth, powdered with a tiny puff, put dark tracery about her eyes, and did a hundred more little things not worth recording. At one stage of the performance Monsieur was so overcome that he leaned forward suddenly, and imprinted a fervent kiss on the lovely but unduly exposed throat.

At this I gave involuntarily an impatient movement, but closed my eyes tightly as I heard Monsieur say softly, in French, "Our fair companion is wakeful," and heard the now familiar sniff in reply.

As the time went on, the love-making grew more and more pronounced.

Neither of my companions seemed to observe me any more than if I had been a necessary part of the railway carriage's furnishings.

I can conceive nothing more absolutely sickening, more idiotic, than love-making in which one is not one of the two principals, but merely a looker-on. By and by getting rather tired of the affair, which seemed to me interminable, and not being able to sleep, I gave up all pretense, and murmuring something about having a very severe headache, I lay with wide-open eyes smelling my salts, and now and then bathing my forehead with the bay rum.

My companions' voices grew lower and lower. Mere inarticulate murmurs they soon seemed to me.

The lady rose, and coming to my side, said, very pleasantly, "I am sorry that you have such a headache. Here is something that will make it better."

I was vaguely conscious of a sweet, powerful odor, a smothering feeling against which I struggled vainly. Then I sank into a deep sleep and knew nothing more until, upon reaching Paris, I was rudely awakened by the door of the carriage being quickly

opened, and two strange men in uniform coming to my side.

I sat up staring wildly, wondering, into their faces, not understanding half that was being said to me, or read from the paper that one man held in his hand.

At last I comprehended. I was being arrested as a Madame Xavier, who, with an accomplice, had been discovered as being deeply concerned in a diamond robbery which had recently taken place at a hotel by the Italian lakes. They had been traced to a small station near Geneva, and were supposed to have taken there, the train for Paris.

I could only stare and protest my innocence, but to no avail. The description was perfect, for to my horror I found I was clothed in the identical pink cotton gown of my late companion, covered, I was glad to find, with the brown silk dust-cloak, so that the extremely low neck was not too much in evidence. Gone was my simple sailor hat, and the Parisian "creation" left in its stead. My tweed skirt, the smart shirtwaist, all had disappeared, and worst of all, the fiends had torn from my feet my stout, hob-nailed walking-boots, that I had worn in my mountain and glacier climbing at Chamonix, prized for their especially thick soles and general "knowing" air. My poor feet were shod instead, with a pair of those disgusting splay-footed, sandal-like, strapped slippers, affected by a certain class of Parisian women. When I had seen those same women dressed in bloomers and wearing those shoes I had been quite disgusted, and now to find that I had such things on my feet! I could have kicked like an angry child.

At my waist was the gorgeous, jingling, jangling chatelaine. How I wished I had never seen it! Gone was my honest Boston bag. In its

place was the huge affair. Every least thing that could assert my identity had been carefully removed.

There was nothing to do—I must go with the men to what was the French equivalent for a police office in English.

It was early in the morning. All Paris lay under a veil of mist. Few people were abroad. Sadly I rode along with my two captors. I had long ceased to struggle and protest, but had settled down grimly to the grin-and-bear-it stage. My New England temperament forbade my making any unnecessary useless scenes.

I was not half as certain as I had been twelve hours ago about the safety and advisability of women's traveling alone, and I writhed inwardly when I thought of the "I told you so's" in store for me if ever I saw any of my friends again.

I thought of the relatives who had promised to meet me in London that very afternoon on the arrival of the Calais and Dover boat train. What would they think, and might they not—for I had no conception of what fate was in store for me—cable to my family in America that I was lost, before I could find any way of sending them word? I had no knowledge of French methods. The prisoners of the Bastille were all of whom I could think, and the ghost of the guillotine also came dimly before me.

I felt utterly hopeless. I racked my brains to think of some one I knew in the beautiful city, but could recall no one. Suddenly I remembered reading in one of my home letters, or hearing some one say, that my old playmate, Tom Leland, had gone to Paris to study art.

Although we had been dear friends from earliest childhood I had not seen him since we parted in anger, at Bar Harbor, three years before, but his very name brought hope into my heart.

The men in the police station were very kind and considerate. One sent out for rolls and hot coffee, which I greatly needed.

The men stared and I ate. They questioned me in halting English. I replied in as halting, lame, or even more so, French. Again they read the description, and looked keenly at me to verify each detail. Suddenly my ears, now sharpened by dire necessity and desperation, caught the words "*grain de beauté*"—French for "mole."

"I have no mole on my cheek!" I exclaimed, indignantly.

"Madame forgets herself," said one of the young men in the police office, who wore an English eye-glass, whose clothes seemed to be made from English models, and whose imitation English airs had much amused me in spite of my troubles. He handed me a small mirror, and I saw, to my great amazement, a large black mole on my left cheek, quite near my eye, and shining like a patch on my pallid, anxious countenance.

"Oh, those incarnate fiends!" I mentally exclaimed, and wetting in my mouth the lace-trimmed morsel I had been left in lieu of my good, sensible Irish linen handkerchief, I essayed to wash off the unsightly spot. Recalling Lady Macbeth's famous words concerning spots I worked away with a will. Alas! my—spot would not "out." My late companions were no journeymen, but masters in their business, and the pseudo mole was put on to stay until time wore it off, as I found out later.

The discovery of the mole was the proverbial last straw. Leaning forward, I buried my face in my hands, and the tears, that until now I had restrained womanfully, threatened to come in a flood. But I noticed, as I bent forward, a faint rustle or crackle. Joy! It was my passport, which I

had placed, when I had started on this never-to-be-forgotten journey, well down inside my innermost garment.

How this precious paper escaped the eyes of my late fellow-travelers I know not. Perhaps they were content with making my outside a truthful copy, and in their haste had not bothered too much about my interior.

I had often been laughed at for so greatly prizing my passport, and always keeping it somewhere near me, but now it had a chance to prove its usefulness, and as quickly as possible I drew it forth.

"See this!" I cried. The officers examined it attentively, and looked puzzled. No mole was mentioned, but the description, except for that, was almost identical with that with which they had been furnished for my arrest. More rapid talk, senseless gabble much of it sounded to me; some held that moles would grow on a face quite suddenly, perhaps in a night's time; others held quite the reverse opinion; all points of the question of my identity were gone into again.

Certain recent *visés* appealed to the officers somewhat, and at last at my reiterated pleading to have a representative of the United States notified of my sad plight, a messenger was sent to the Consul General's office.

Countless hours, as they seemed to me, at last wore away, and just as I had begun to feel that I could bear the suspense no longer, and if I were to be locked up for life or killed outright I wanted to have it done and over at once, the man returned with some one from the Consul General's office. Finally, after many preliminaries that I did not try to understand, though my passport seemed to be of value, my identity as an unobtrusive, innocent citizen of the United States



"I could only protest my innocence."

was established clearly enough to satisfy the French officials, and I was once more at liberty.

The Consul's messenger escorted me to the station for Calais. Fortunately the money in the little bag hung from my neck had been spared and my ticket for London was soon bought. I forgot to say that "Madame" and her husband had appropriated my through ticket from Geneva to London, substituting one of their own to Paris in its place.

I had just settled myself in a corner of the railway carriage, starting with nervous terror at every sound, and longing for the train to get under way, when the door was—as seems to have

happened several times before in this tale—thrown violently open. With a suppressed scream I started to my feet, only to be caught in the strong arms of dear old Tom Leland.

By a truly blessed coincidence Tom had happened to call at the Consul General's office soon after the messenger had been dispatched to my rescue, and had heard of the disaster to one of his countrywomen.

He had followed hastily on the heels of my deliverer, had missed me at the police office, again nearly lost me by his cab horse falling on the slippery street, but at last had caught me just in the nick of time.

The journey to Calais was like a beautiful dream after a most frightful nightmare. How delightful it was to be waited upon, to be tenderly cared for once more. Nothing was forgotten, from bonbons and light lunches

to exquisite flowers wherever they could be obtained.

"O Tom!" I cried, after a time, "I have had enough of traveling alone."

"You never shall again, if I can help it," he answered, tenderly, and in earnest of his words he went all the way to London with me, not forgetting to telegraph to my wondering relatives when we reached Dover, for I was hours behind my appointed time.

I still have the chatelaine with all its trinkets—it was only silver gilt—and the big dressing-bag—the same kind of metal in that, too—as souvenirs of my eventful journey. The cook and housemaid waxed joyous over the gifts of the picture hat, pink frock, and dust-cloak. But the horrible, splay-footed, strapped slippers, Tom and I, with shouts of savage glee, burned that very night of my arrival, in the coal-grate of my London home.

The Story of the Invisible Cat

BY RENÉ BACHE

The circumstances under which I became the occupant of Ogle House were peculiar, and I frankly confess that I would have hesitated to move in had I been aware of its unpleasant reputation; for my wife was at that time in poor health, and anything likely to disturb her nerves was to be avoided.

However, my finances at that period had arrived at such a low ebb that the unexpected inheritance of the property by my wife, from an uncle who had so far disapproved of her marriage as to declare his intention to leave her a sixpence and nothing more, immediately suggested the idea of occupying it ourselves. Indeed, we could find no other use for it, inasmuch as the

old manor-house was in such a condition of disrepair as to be unrentable.

I cannot help entertaining an impression that my worthy uncle by marriage was actuated by motives of malice, rather than of generosity, in leaving the estate to my wife. It had once been very valuable, but altered conditions, brought by the Civil War, made it practically worthless; he never occupied it himself, and from his point of view it was simply a burden in taxes.

The first difficulty we experienced was in securing a servant. Farmers' daughters in the neighborhood, ordinarily available as domestic "help," showed an indisposition to accept the employment I offered, and eventually

one of them, more frank than the others, said bluntly that she "wouldn't work in 'no haunted house.'" This was decidedly enlightening, and led to inquiries which made me at length aware of the ominous repute of the establishment. Nevertheless, we solved the servant problem eventually by hiring, from the city, a very respectable woman, somewhat elderly, who declared that she was "afraid of nothing, from spooks to mice." To tell the truth, her statement only did her justice.

For the first few weeks of our tenancy of Ogle House we observed nothing that could indorse the supernatural reputation of the mansion. We were not disturbed in any way, and I decided that the reports on the subject were merely old wives' tales. My recollection is that more than a month elapsed before anything occurred to disturb this first impression. Meanwhile, we found ourselves fairly comfortable, though our supply of furniture by no means met the requirements of so large a mansion, and as a result, one-half of the establishment remained empty, while we occupied the other half.

In describing a few of the phenomena observed in the Ogle mansion, I speak first of the moving lights, merely because they were brought earliest to my attention, and not on account of their importance. Indeed, at the present moment I have no more notion of their cause or significance than when I first observed them, and accordingly I will not attempt to enlarge on the subject, beyond mentioning that they were seen to shift at night from window to window of the untenanted part of the house, when watched from outside. As I ascertained from neighborhood stories, they had been observed to do this for many years, and while the dwelling itself was supposed to be uninhabited.

With the purpose of "laying the ghost," I explored on many nights the empty rooms, but never did I succeed in capturing a "spook" of any sort.

The ghost of the ante-bellum owner of the property was accountable for the disturbances, said the neighbors. He was, it seemed, a man of violent temper, and there was a report to the effect that he had starved one of his slaves in the attic of the mansion until the poor wretch died, though another rumor had it that the black chattel was tortured to death in the cellar. More dreadful yet, however, was the accusation that he had murdered his own daughter, on account of a dispute with her respecting her lover, of whom he did not approve.

It may seem odd, in beginning an account of occurrences apparently involving intrusion by supernatural agency, to start with so commonplace a happening as the tumbling down stairs of my elder boy, who explained the accident by saying that he had tripped over a cat—a statement which, as I remember, rather surprised me at the time, inasmuch as we did not keep such an animal on the premises. My wife has always entertained that sort of horror of cats which, while unaccountable, is none the less a torture to those who suffer from it. The incident of the tumble might easily have passed without comment if it had not been repeated twice within the next three weeks. Children, of course, are apt to fall down stairs more or less frequently, and I would have been disposed to think little of the matter had it not been that it was always on the same flight that the boy fell, and each time he declared, with sobbing vehemence, that he had tripped over a cat. Obviously, a child's notion, one would say, and as such I set it down; but I confess that I thought it very odd

when soon afterward my younger boy fell down the same flight of steps, and promptly declared that a cat had tripped him.

My elderly servant, Hannah, was of a very practical turn of mind. I never knew a woman of her class who had fewer notions than she, of the sort that arise from popular ignorance and misinformation. Often I found it advisable to consult her on important domestic matters, my wife being at the time an invalid, and she always had sensible advice to give. Therefore, I was to some extent impressed by a communication which, one morning, she had to make about voices audible on the stairs. She declared that she was not in the least frightened, but that she had heard such voices on a number of occasions while on her way to bed.

A staircase, appropriately constructed, will serve the purpose of a whispering gallery, and I found no great difficulty in persuading the woman that what she had heard was merely an echo of voices in the occupied rooms. She appeared to accept this explanation, and two months passed before the matter was brought again to my attention. I was sitting one evening in my study writing, when at about eleven o'clock I heard Hannah's slippers coming slowly up the stairs. It did not pass my door as usual, but paused, and presently she entered. I noticed that there was a peculiar expression on her face as she came in and put her candle on a chair, wiping her hands on her apron as was her wont when she had something of importance to say on any subject.

"Mr. Richards," she said, "there's something wrong."

"Something wrong, Hannah?" I queried, putting down my pen. "What is it, pray?"

"It's the voices on the stairs," she

said. "I haven't wanted to bother you about them, and that's why I haven't spoken—barring what I said a few weeks back. But every night, coming up, I've heard the voices, and I'm sure there's something wrong."

I knocked the ashes out of my pipe, filled it again, lighted it, and gazed at Hannah with a profound attention. My conviction was that hers was a delusion of a mild type, to be treated with gentleness and consideration.

"Ghosts, eh, Hannah?" I inquired, soothingly.

"It's almost the time," she went on, taking no notice whatever of my remark, "and I want to ask you to come and listen."

"Come and listen where?"

"On the stairs," said Hannah.

I took a reflective whiff or two at my pipe, and then, laying it down, I rose and followed.

It is the pride of the reasonable man that he is open to conviction, and so I made a point of waiving argument with Hannah. She offered me evidence, and I was bound to listen to it. Accordingly, I placed myself in her hands, though I had a very indistinct notion of what she would be at.

My study was on the third floor, in the rear of the house, and inasmuch as gas, in common with most of the other "modern imps," as they are termed in the newspaper advertisements of real estate, was lacking in this "elegant suburban establishment," I took with me one of the two small lamps which had been employed to shed light upon my literary pursuits, while Hannah carried her candle. We descended one flight of stairs, and paused at the landing. It was one of those huge, old-fashioned hallways, commonly found in southern mansions of the ante-bellum epoch, which seem to have been designed for the reception of guests rather than



"There was a dull and smothered sound as of something falling."

as a mere accommodation for the household ladder.

Hannah indicated that we were to stop there at the top of the first flight, and I acquiesced without remark. Argumentatively speaking, my position was purely passive; if the good woman had any evidence to offer, I was there to accept it and judge of its value. There was little doubt in my mind that she was laboring under a delusion, however, and this impression was strengthened after we had waited fully ten minutes in vain for something to happen. It seemed such utter nonsense that, eager to get back to my writing and my pipe, I was on the point of declaring my unwillingness to pursue the matter further, when suddenly Hannah grasped my arm forcibly.

Her action was unnecessary, for as she did so, I distinctly heard a sound as of whispering, which seemed to come from the stairs just below us. It was unmistakably a whisper by human voices—I could swear to that—and apparently two persons were speaking together, one hoarsely and angrily, and the other in terms of petition and deprecation. Some moments elapsed before I was able to make this out in detail, but I was sure there was no mistake; I could even perceive that one of the voices was that of a woman, while the harsh one was a man's. I have spoken of them as whispering, but it would be more correct to say that they were pitched in a very low tone, so as to be scarcely audible. Presently there was a dull and smothered sound, as if of something falling, and the voices ceased.

"That is the end," said Hannah to me, coolly. "Let us go back to your study, if you please, sir."

"I'm a poor sleeper, sir," Hannah explained, when we were once more in my den, "and that is why I go to bed so late. The whispering you've

been listening to on the stairs goes on every night; it begins exactly at a quarter to twelve and lasts just so long. Then there is the fall—you know what I mean—and all is quiet afterwards. There's something wrong somehow, sir, and I believe it's a murder."

"A murder, Hannah!" I said, filling my pipe with fingers which I confess shook a little as I packed the tobacco into the bowl. "What do you mean by that?"

"I mean, sir, that there's been a murder done in this house, and the whispering on the stairs has something to do with it. Those were no living voices that we heard to-night."

I confess that I was upset. Indeed, I may frankly own that I felt a bit frightened. But I did not wish to acknowledge my weakness to Hannah, and so I said, "It seems to me you are letting your fancy run away with you. Why should you suppose that the voices have to do with a murder?"

"You have heard the story, sir?"

"About the killing of the girl by her father?"

"Yes, sir."

"I have heard it, as neighborhood rumor, presumably unfounded. But what of that? It has no necessary connection with the matter of which we are talking."

Hannah eyed me shrewdly, as if suspecting that I was not speaking with entire frankness.

"Did you understand anything of what the voices said on the stairs?" she asked, abruptly.

"I thought I caught a couple of words," I admitted, "but probably I was mistaken."

"The words were, 'Oh, papa,' weren't they?"

I confess that this question startled me. While listening at the stairs, I had understood nothing of what the voices said except this very exclama-

tion, which, as it seemed to me, was uttered just before the ominous sound that closed the whispered colloquy. Hannah evidently perceived that she had made her point.

"Good night, sir," she said, picking up her candle, and there our conversation ended.

I was inclined to scoff at the ghosts when I awoke the next morning. It was only about 6 A. M., but the summer sun was bright outside, and the birds in the neglected garden twittered merrily, seeming to invite an early ramble; so I made a hasty toilet, and in five minutes was ready to start. My wife slept in an adjoining room, and for fear of disturbing her, I walked on tiptoe. On the landing at the top of the lower flight of stairs I noticed two or three spots of tallow that had dropped from Hannah's candle when we stood there a few hours earlier, and I smiled to think of my own fears, while determining mentally that I would find out what freak of acoustics was accountable for the voices of the night.

I was, I say, in the midst of these reflections, and had got about half-way down the flight of stairs, when my foot struck something and I fell headlong. I could have sworn it was a cat—the contact was of a sort hardly to be mistaken—and the first thing I did on landing at the bottom was to curse the beast in no measured terms. Luckily, I was only bruised, and the always-useful Hannah was presently at hand with arnica and other "first aid" applications. Being sound sleepers, the other members of my family were not aroused by the noise.

"Perhaps you'll believe it now," said Hannah, as she prepared a bandage for my injured ankle.

"Believe what?" I replied, with a grunt of pain.

"About the cat."

"What about the cat? I fell over

a cat, and if I catch the brute, I'll wring its neck."

"You'll never catch it, sir," said Hannah. "It's not the kind of a cat that can be caught."

"Another of your ghosts, perhaps," I suggested. "A spectral kitchen pet, eh?"

The old woman disdained to answer my question. Looking me in the eye, she said, "Did you see it, sir?"

"See the cat? No, I didn't, but I felt it. I struck it with my foot."

"Half-way up the flight?"

"Yes, just about, I should think."

"That's where it always sits," said Hannah, calmly. "You were coming down close by the wall, and not holding on to the banisters."

"How do you know that?"

"Because the cat sits near the wall on the eleventh step below the landing and never anywhere else."

"Hannah!" I exclaimed, fairly losing patience, "what is all this nonsense you are talking? If there is anything mysterious, explain yourself, and I will listen to what you have to say. I warn you in advance, however, that I have no sympathy with your superstitions."

She took no notice of the sneer, but finished tying the bandage about my ankle. Then, helping me to a chair in the dining-room, which was just off the stairs, she sat herself down and began her story.

"You can't depend for truth," she said, "upon everything that's said in a neighborhood. But if you pick up a bit here and there, and sift out the idle gossip, you can get at some facts after a while. Now, that's what I've been doing ever since I came here first. You told me yourself that the place was supposed to be haunted, and I wanted to find out what was at the bottom of the stories.

"The first fact I got hold of was that Ogle House, before the war, be-

longed to an old gentleman called Colonel Dee, who had one child, a very pretty girl, named Mildred. He was extremely fond of her, but didn't approve of the young man she wanted to marry. There was a bitter quarrel, and it is said that the young lady threatened to run away, but it so happened that she was killed by falling downstairs, and that was the end. The gossips said that her father knocked her downstairs in a fit of anger and killed her. Maybe it was a lie, but her own maid, who still lives in the village, has told me that it was the truth.

"The Colonel was a man of great influence, and nobody ever ventured to speak openly of the suspicion against him. But people avoided him, and by and by he became a sort of hermit. When the war came, his slaves ran away, and that made him even more bitter; for he had treated them very kindly, being always a pleasant man except when he lost his temper. There isn't a bit of truth, sir, I believe, in the stories about his killing or torturing a negro.

"For years and years the Colonel lived in this great house alone, with no companion except a very large gray cat, which had belonged to his daughter. When, on rare occasions, he was noticed walking in his garden, the animal was always with him. The gossips said it was an imp of Satan in disguise, and declared that at night it carried the lights which moved about from window to window of the mansion. Maybe the Colonel wandered from room to room, being unable to sleep; but he's long dead, and the cat too, I, suppose, and yet the lights are still seen."

"That's a very interesting story, Hannah," I said, as she paused. "As a raconteur you have developed a skill which surprises me; but I confess that I do not quite catch your

drift. The Colonel killed his daughter on the stairs—I wish they had been the back stairs, and not the front stairs—and hence, I suppose, the voices we imagined we heard last night. But how about the cat? Are we to infer that the Colonel's cat has anything to do with my cat—with the cat over which I have just tumbled so disastrously, which, as I suspect, you have been entertaining in the kitchen, notwithstanding the strict orders I gave you that all such animals were to be rigidly excluded?"

Hannah's eye met mine, and I felt that she knew I was "bluffing." The fact is, that I was trying, with rather poor success, to conceal my own apprehensions. I was nervous about the cat business, and I had not forgotten the mysterious voices of the previous night.

"Well, Hannah," I said, at length, in desperation, "you know more about ghosts than I do, and I leave the investigation entirely in your hands. You may conduct it as you please."

"Thank you for the permission, sir," replied Hannah. "I shall send for the carpenter, then, at once."

"For the carpenter! What for?"

"I want him to do a little job of work, sir," said Hannah.

At about eleven o'clock that morning, while busy in my study, I was disturbed by noises below, and went to see what the matter was. To my surprise, I discovered a carpenter in the act of tearing up a portion of the lower flight of stairs, while Hannah and my two boys gazed interestedly at the performance. I would have put a stop to it, but remembered that I had given *carte blanche* for an investigation, which evidently was now proceeding. I noticed presently that only a single step was being taken up—the eleventh from the top of the flight—but owing to the unusual

width of the staircase, and to the weight of the oaken slabs composing it, some time was consumed in the operation.

My first impression, when the step was lifted, was that there was nothing but a mass of dust beneath. Hannah, however, pushed the carpenter rudely aside, and brushed away with her hands what proved to be a quantity of debris covering something more substantial, namely, a box, which was presently revealed as a carefully made case of hard wood, two feet in length by a foot in width. It looked curiously like a child's coffin, being painted brown and provided with metal handles.

By this time I had begun to take an acute interest in what was going on, and I remember that I was much surprised when the box proved to have no fastening whatever, a fact I am unable to account for in view of the valuable nature of its contents. The latter—I will say, to avoid raising the reader's expectations too high—consisted of nine thousand dollars in gold, done up in three small canvas bags, and a few small bones, which we overlooked at first among the dust that had crept into the little chest and partly filled it. In one of the bags of gold coin, however, was a letter, much yellowed and in parts almost illegible. It read as follows:

"Contained in this box are certain moneys in gold coin, which I hide away with the idea that, at a future time, affairs may so arrange themselves, perhaps, as to render such a hoard extremely useful to me, my landed estate having become almost worthless. If I put these savings to no employment before my own demise, however, it is my wish that the sum

shall become the property of any future owner of Ogle House who may chance to discover it. This I say in order that there may be no dispute over it in case it is found. I wish here to state—and, being a dead man at the time when this testimony is read, I can have no object in speaking falsely—that the cruel reports which have been circulated, to the effect that I murdered my dear daughter, are without foundation, save to the extent that I did threaten her with upraised hand, for which may God forgive me; and, being alarmed, she started backward on the stairs, falling over her pet cat, which was clinging to her skirts, and breaking her neck. Being guilty in so far, and pride forbidding explanations, I have preferred to accept popular odium rather than condescend to defend myself against so abominable a charge. My feeling has always been that I cared not for the friendship or regard of anybody who would for a moment deem me capable of such a deed. As for the cat of which I have spoken, its body is buried in this box, beneath the eleventh step.

"ANDREW DEE."

The signature was that of Colonel Dee, the former owner of the property, from whose heirs my late lamented uncle bought the estate, probably with the notion that, the war being over, it would again become valuable. This, however, proved to be a mistake, and so it came about that he left Ogle House to my wife. I was glad to sell the old place for a price very little above the amount of the mortgage. But the nine thousand dollars in gold was "lucky money," as it proved, and I managed so to multiply it by a series of fortunate investments that the wolf has never barked at my door since I moved out of the haunted mansion, which was shortly after the occurrences I have related. I always thought that Hannah was entitled to at least a part of the treasure, but she never could be persuaded to take any of it. She died, fifteen years later, in my service.



We were doing what we used to describe, in our younger days, as "just sitting 'round." That is, everybody was in an easy, invertebrate attitude of mind, as well as lounging physically. Francesca, with his knack for oddities, recalled that once, while walking through a field, he had stumbled upon something in the rich mold, and looking down, discovered a skull whose sockets were choked with living violets.

"Which reminds me," said Rudolph, "of an episode in connection with a spot that I once frequented. I came upon the place in one of my rambles beyond the city, and afterwards used to loiter there for an hour or so with my pipe and a book. In the intervals of reading, I communed with nature, loafing and inviting my soul.

"It was on a hilly slope, in an obscure corner of a cemetery. Coming down the steep gravel path, if you looked back, you caught a vista of wave-like mounds, crested here and there with white roses. In front, the path broke into a flight of stone terraces, overlooking the river. I loved the place, especially of an autumn evening, when the yellow and green leaves on the topmost tips of the tulip poplars that filled the ravine on one side, glittered like flakes of gold in the mellow sunlight. Nothing marred the stillness except, perhaps, a belated galloper into the city, whose horse's hoofs rang on the road below. Along the opposite shore, the river's

brim was darkling with the imagery of a border of willows, but the sweep of unrippled water drank in the radiance above, glowing in even richer hues than those that stained the sky. A single, pulsating star in the west dripped its liquid sheen in a glittering track athwart the stream. I used to steep my soul in all this poetry. Tom Campbell's lines would come into my mind, but Wagner's little song gives me the feeling of that time more perfectly than anything I know.

"The profile of the slope, an edge of grass and flowers vibrating against the luminous water, was broken by a granite cross, and higher up, by the statue of a mother with two babes folded in her arms. As appeared from a legend at the base, she was a German, and her husband was the sculptor. Doubtless he chose the place because it brought back recollections of some beloved spot by the Rhine. I used to weave sad little romances about her, as I watched her face blush with the last kiss of the lovely evening light.

"Not far from the statue were two burial plots, 'lots,' as they are called, on either side of the path. Each was neatly hedged with freshly planted box. When I first sought out the place, each plot contained a single newly made grave. For nearly a year—in blossom-time, in the yellow leaf, in bleak, wintry weather—every Sunday evening that I happened to be there, and doubtless also every Sunday that I did not, a widow was at

one of the graves, a widower at the other.

"He was tall, lank, and slightly stooped. His clear skin had a healthy tan, and his little blue eyes, when he looked at you, shone with a sort of yearning, as if he had kept himself in reserve, or had habitually schooled himself to repression. In cold weather, the tip of his large drooping nose was usually gemmed by a pendulous drop, which he would snuffle away with a black-bordered handkerchief.

"I never could quite make out his age. He may have been somewhere between middle life and that condition vaguely described as 'elderly gentleman.' There was something quiet and refined and gentle about him, which precluded intrusion of any sort. Of course, seeing him not infrequently, I would bow as we passed, and once or twice we exchanged a word or two. I used to take him in with the tail of my eye as he sat on a galvanized iron chair at the head of the grave, at the other end of which, in due course, appeared a foot-piece of decent red granite, inscribed, above the conventional dates, with the single name,

EVALINA.

"He would potter about, examining the roots of the hedge, or plucking a plantain-leaf out of the shaved grass. Then, having carefully molded his black gloves on his hands, he would smooth out the narrow margin of silk nap above the deep band of crêpe by a regular rotary motion of his hat against the sleeve of his frock coat, the tails of which he would carefully gather up about his knees as he sat down again to gaze out over the river, or to look meditatively at a wreath of tin immortelles.

"The beveled coping at the entrance of the other plot bore the legend, in raised letters,

TO MY BELOVED HUSBAND
ELMER.

"The widow, like the visitor across the path, was also childless. I shall never forget my first impres-



"At last they got acquainted."

sion of her. Her weeds were the heaviest imaginable, and as she dried her eyes, her handkerchief, fluttering in the breeze, disclosed in the center

only a tiny square of white, like a storm signal. She was on her knees, lying almost prone, her face buried in a mass of mortuary flowers and purple ribbons that were heaped upon the mound. Occasionally her figure shook with the paroxysms of a violent sob. I wondered whether such anguish could long endure.

"She was younger than the widower, perhaps not more than thirty-five. Short and very plump, she was of a type that many men would call pretty. Usually, as she passed, she tinged the air with lavender. Once, the wind blowing aside her thick veil, I caught a glance from her usually downcast eyes. Despite the stain of recent tears, there was a suggestion of something peeping out, something off on the edge of her black irides, a sparkle, perhaps, of repressed fire, gone ere you could catch it, that reminded me of the widower. It was something akin to his yearning gleam.

"At last they got acquainted. Of course they could not help seeing each other week after week. At first they merely bowed, and if they happened to come out on the gravel path at the same moment, he stood discreetly aside, with his hat in his hand. Once, as she was pulling the dead leaves off some shrubs with her fingers, he got up, walked over, bowed gravely, and producing from his waist-coat pocket a small pair of scissors that he had used for a similar purpose, politely offered them to her. A pin which she dropped he picked up, and while she bent over the shrubs, he helped her to tuck back her veil. He even went so far as to collect some twigs and leaves from the grass, depositing them in a neat little pile on the path.

"After that, their friendliness increased. He got into the habit of helping her to tidy up her plot. When they finished, she would go

over and sit on his galvanized chair, upon which he would first put his palm to see if the seat were dry, or it might be, he would carefully brush off the dust with his handkerchief. They would fall into conversation, obviously of a reminiscent character, for not infrequently she melted away in a flood of tears, during which he would look on the ground, or snip off a twig straggling from the clipped hedge. They always walked out to the gate together. On such occasions he would render her a dozen little thoughtful attentions. With the easiest possible manner, devoid of any trace either of embarrassment or of familiarity, as if it were second nature to him, he would help her to arrange her veil, hold her coat, and carry her parasol.

"I came upon them once, unawares. They did not notice my approach, and I stood perfectly still. I could not help it. They were sitting on a bench, just where the German mother was fondling her babes at the top of the flight of stone terraces overlooking the river. The widow's head was resting partly on his arm, and she was weeping softly in her handkerchief. Presently she said: 'It was always dear Elmer's way. You know he was never very strong, and that is likely to spoil one's disposition. After his illness, for nearly three years I waited on him as if he were a baby. He would never let anybody do anything for him but me. When he scolded, of course it was only his way of showing how much he cared for me.'

"The widower placed his hand on hers. 'That was just Evalina's way,' he said.

" 'You know,' she went on, quite naively, 'I am so fond of children. It would have helped me so much, and I should have been so happy, if—if we had only—only had—' She dissolved in another gush of tears.

"He sniffled a bit, and dabbed his eyes and nose with his own handkerchief. Pressing her hand, ever so gently, he said: 'I understand.'

"She got up, still weeping, and let her cheek rest on the foot of the German mother, precisely as I have seen tear-stained women, with devoted kiss, sob on the lip-worn marble toe of Our Lady of Maternity, in the little jewel-strown shrine in that dingy back street in Rome. Multitudes have convinced themselves of the miraculous potentialities in the toe of Our Lady of Maternity. I know that there was something efficacious in the caress which the plump little widow, in the gush of her disappointed hopes, gave the foot of the glow-suffused German mother. In that moment, I do firmly believe, there was a metempsychosis of the women's souls.

"When she became calm, the widow, as if it were the most natural thing in the world, placed her arm in his, and they departed down the gravel path toward the gate.

"After that I was away from the city for some weeks. When I came back, and fell into my old habits, I

did not see them again. In an indifferent sort of way, I inquired about them of the grave-digger who used to cut the grass on the two plots.

" 'O yes, sir,' he answered, quite readily, 'they were married one afternoon in the chapel down by the gate. I was a witness.' "

* * * *

"Heavens!" said Francesca, "I suppose they went off to the train in a hearse, and the bride, instead of orange-blossoms, wore asphodels."

"I don't know about that," Rudolph answered, "but a long time after, nearly two years, I should say, I met him down town one spring morning. Clad in a light gray suit, with a pink blossom in the coat, he was tripping along as if he were walking on air. Recognizing me instantly, he stopped, and gave me a warm pressure of the hand. The yearning look was gone, and a bright cordiality shone out of his eyes.

" 'I should like you to come to see me,' he said, 'I should like you to see my boys.' "

" 'Boys?' I asked.

" 'Yes,' he answered, 'twins.' "



A Question of Knighthood

BY WILLIAM R. LIGHTON

"I am waiting, Margaret," Graham suggested, gently. He had been waiting for many minutes, standing before her, looking down upon her, his arm resting lightly upon a corner of the broad mantel-shelf, the strength of his clean-lined face at once softened and intensified by the mellow glow of the open fire. And through those minutes the girl had sat quite motionless, her round chin supported in her palms, her beautiful, grave eyes fixed upon the blaze, her full, scarlet lips held in meditative restraint. It was a time for serious thought, for he had just now asked her to become his wife.

"I am waiting, Margaret," he said again, presently, with no change of tone or manner. She stirred slightly, her smooth brow contracting as with something like irritation. From the first to the last word of his confession he had spoken with that same gentle tranquillity. Save for his evident earnestness he might have appeared unconcerned; and his earnestness seemed only to heighten his calm. Throughout their long intimacy—an intimacy whose beginning lay in their early childhood—that had been his constant habit. As her thoughts ranged swiftly back over the years, she could not remember a time when his poise had been disturbed, his command of his moods relaxed. It was upon this that she was reflecting, hesitating, trying to set in order the conflicting emotions he had aroused in her.

So long as they had been merely friends in their outward relations, with no more than a tacit understanding of

deeper feeling, she had often found a welcome refuge in his imperturbability, a safe retreat from the perils of her own changeful humors. He was so strong, so assured! It was as if he carried a key to all the troublesome problems of life's arithmetic, a key whose use was forbidden to other folk. It was very good, vastly comforting, more blessed than she had ever appreciated, to have such a friend.

And she had long known that he was more than friend; she had long been certain that at some time this present crisis in their relations would come. Once or twice before it had seemed imminent, quickening her heart-beats, thrilling her with a maidenly exultation, and leaving her, as it passed, possessed by a curious sense of loss and denial. Yet, now that he had spoken, offering all that she had shyly expected and desired, she was hesitant, doubtful. That, she was vaguely aware, was as characteristic of her as steadfast persistence was of him. She was trying to prefigure what the future would be to her, if she would elect to abide forever within the firm, strong walls opening before her, inviting her. A fortress had its uses, as she had found; but, once its gates had shut her in irrevocably, might it not be more a prison than a home? For her, the best part of life had been its surprises, its rich offerings of unguessed gifts from the full treasury of youthful emotion and desire. It was not that she was fickle—she loathed inconstancy; it was only that her spirit found greater joy in promise than in fulfillment. Even pain and loss she had learned to wel-

come hopefully, expectant of some glorious revelation of blessings in their train. As the wife of this man, with his inviolable serenity, would there be any more surprises? Would life have anything to offer beyond the consciousness of having once for all and finally attained?

Attained to what? What was it that gave him this mighty confidence? What had he done to prove his right to it? Eagerly her groping thoughts

seized upon the question, as if its answer might justify her in her indecision. He had done nothing! From the first his life had been well ordered, well supplied, easy, wholly devoid of any necessity impelling him to share in the robust labors of other men. Nothing so vital as ambition seemed to have entered into his motives; the tension of struggle toward some remote end, difficult of attainment, yet worthy of manly effort, seemed never



"I am waiting, Margaret."

to have been his. What he had got from life had come, not as earned reward, but apparently as mere beneficence of a kindly fortune. That he had suffered no defeat to shake his assurance might be only because he had essayed no victory. He had done nothing save to possess his soul in peace. So his strength was, after all, unproved, perhaps illusive. It seemed strange to her that she had never thought of this before. As it came to her now, like a flash of discovery, it gave her an odd feeling of relief, almost as if it opened a way of escape from a situation that might prove unwelcome.

"John," she said, with sudden resolution, "I wonder if you can understand what I want to say to you."

"If you will say 'Yes,' I think I shall understand, dear," he answered; and although she refrained from looking at him, keeping her glance upon the fire, she was conscious of his quiet smile.

"Ah!" she retorted; "and if I should say 'No,' you couldn't understand at all, could you?"

"Is 'No' to be your answer, then, Margaret?" he asked at once, with no tremor of variance from his wonted calm. She bit her lip, striving to hold herself in check, waiting a moment for control.

"I had hoped not," he said. "I have been cherishing the hope for a long time, trying to believe that you could love me, as I love you. *You* believe, don't you, Margaret?"

She looked at him then, meeting his steady glance fairly, and feeling the color mounting to her face at what she saw.

"Yes," she answered, simply, "of course I believe you love me. And if I could think that marriage is so simple as that—that love is all—I should say 'Yes,' gladly, gladly. But

there are other things, John; things that I don't believe you have ever taken into account, in all your life. Those are the things I want to talk about."

"Other things," he echoed, "other things besides love?"

"Yes," she answered again; then, with an accession of courage, as she saw how hard her task was to be: "No, I'm afraid you won't understand, John; but—I wish you had failed in something."

He continued his intent scrutiny of her face, his eyes serious, though his lips had not surrendered their smile. She thought she could divine what was in his mind. Self-interest was never so dominant in him that he could not relish, in his broad-tempered way, any flavor of humor in a situation. Now she thought him amused at what he considered a mere womanish vagary. The consciousness nerved her.

"Yes," she repeated, "I wish you had failed in some big, bold, brave undertaking—some of the things other men are doing, or trying to do. I could love you, I think, for what that failure would imply—that you had at least tried to win something worth while, and to prove yourself."

"It seems that I am likely to fail now," he suggested. "Will that make you love me?"

Her slender foot, tapping upon the hearthstones, signaled her impatience with his whimsicality, and at once he became grave.

"Forgive me," he said, "if I have seemed to make light of it. Try to tell me what you mean. Dear girl, I do want to understand."

"We must both try," she said, gently, "for it means everything to both of us—everything. I'm not belittling you; I know you too well for that. I have always thought you fine, and strong, and able to do big things,

if you chose, but that is what makes it seem so strange that you have really done nothing."

He was wholly serious now, every line upon his face drawn firm, his shoulders squared, his body held finely erect.

"I wish I knew whether it is the girl or the woman in you that's talking," he said.

"I know what you think!" she cried. "You think it is only a romantic notion, like the silly sentiment of a matinee girl for some mock-hero with his hysterical mock-heroics. But that isn't it at all. There *is* sentiment in it, though there always is in every right-minded woman's feeling for the man she is to love. Her feeling isn't for him alone, but for all that he represents to her—the dreams that he makes come true for her, and oh, ever so much besides that he doesn't suspect. That is very different from the man's way, isn't it? I know it is. He thinks of the woman herself. If *she* satisfies him, he doesn't think to ask anything more. Isn't that true? I suppose it's because his dreams, if he has any, are mostly of other things. It's very hard to say what I mean; but I'm sure you know. But with the woman—why, John, every girl thinks that her lover will come to her as a knight, a conqueror. If he hasn't yet conquered, he must have the courage and the will to try."

Her voice was vibrant with a tremulous intensity. Impulsively she stretched her hand toward him; and as he took it into his firm clasp, he found it cold and shaking. He stood for a time, fondling the soft fingers, gently weaving them with his own. A silence fell between them; she studying the fire, he with his eyes hungrily intent upon the exquisite lines of her averted face.

"Dear little girl," he said, by and

by. "Women, too, think of that as the golden age, don't they? And they are really sorry that that old knighthood is dead and gone. I know, I know!"

Her fingers tightened their hold upon his, with a straining pressure.

"Is the spirit of knighthood dead?" she cried. "It isn't the bare facts that count—not sword, nor plume, nor shield; no, nor even their bold doings. It's the quality that counts—the quality that's in the man, and that makes him fit for victory. Can't you see? Isn't there as much chance for that to-day as ever? I should be sorry to think not."

"And I, too," he returned, quietly, "if you mean the things that give real nobility. But aren't you in danger of getting a little bit confused? We must look at things as they are, Margaret. It is the twentieth century, dear. Here: Suppose you had your knight here to-day, ready to prove himself to your liking, and just waiting for your word; what quest would you send him on? What would you have him win for you?"

"John! Nothing! The quest must be his, not mine. He would be my knight, not my squire. I should have nothing to tell him but that he must be a true knight and deserve victory. It isn't what he might win that I should care for. That's what I tried to tell you a while ago. To be a conqueror doesn't mean that one must win some visible thing. It would make no difference to me though my knight should fail of that, and come to me to be consoled for inglorious defeat in his battles, if only he had shown that knightly quality. I shouldn't want him to be so eager to win mere success that he would be in danger of losing the rest. He must be perfectly willing to fail, if need be. Don't you see?"

His smile had returned; his face

was in a glow, not of amusement, but of profound appreciation.

"Why, dear, do you know what you're saying? Do you know how hard a test that would be for a man? There isn't one man in a hundred thousand who could sustain it."

"My knight would be one in a hundred thousand," she argued, stoutly.

"That isn't the fighting man's way of looking at things," he declared. "The fighter must fight to win, or the thing would be only a sham to him; he would think himself no better than a mad Don Quixote tilting at windmills. The fighting man isn't a diletante, an amateur trifler, flirting with Fate. It's wholly serious with him; he must throw his whole heart and soul into it. The glory of making a splendid failure doesn't appeal to him at all. 'A Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood'—that isn't the rôle the fighter sets for himself. Once he has set his thoughts toward winning, he sinks every other idea in that, in spite of himself. Don't you see how inevitable it is that for his devotion to the idea of victory he must pay the full price? And the price is cruelly high, dear; no woman knows how high it is. But if she demands her conqueror, she must take him as he comes, with all the unlovely marks on him—and the marks of success are sometimes more awful than those of failure."

There followed another palpitant interval of silence, which she broke at last, dropping the impersonal note, and coming with frank directness to the matter nearer their hearts.

"No, John, it isn't that I should want you to win anything for me, nor for yourself—not place, nor power, nor riches, nor anything like that. I'm not a covetous woman. For myself, I should want nothing more than your love. That is more than I deserve. But I have liked to believe

that love would make a difference to the man who loved me—that it would make him different, somehow, and lead him to do the fine things that a strong man may do. That is the real meaning of a girl's dream of her conqueror, and not what his conquests will have won for her. I have been wondering what difference love has made to you. You have seemed always the same, since the very first, as if there was nothing that could stir you."

There came upon his face the look she had learned to know so well—the firm set of lines about the lips, and the deep glow of the eyes that betokened his restrained mastery of himself.

"Listen, Margaret," he said, with all his habitual calm. "Do you fancy that love can come to a man only as a sudden convulsion of passion, to lift him all at once out of himself? That isn't true. I have loved you all my life, ever since I can remember, when we were boy and girl. My love has grown as I have grown, and become a part of me. You seem to fear that it hasn't affected me. Why, it has made me what I am, and given me whatever of strength is mine. Without my love, I should be God knows what sort of man. I have seemed 'always the same,' you say, and you speak as if that were a shortcoming of mine. Always the same! That is just what I have tried to be. Think, dear, isn't that as you would have it? The best strength, sweetheart, is steadfast, not fitful; and it fits a man for better things than the furies of passionate conflict and conquest—for there are better things."

He hesitated, devouring her with his eyes, taking her hand again in his and holding it close, with a detaining pressure, as if he did not mean to let it go.

"I am afraid I cannot say what I would, without seeming to vaunt my own virtues. You must make allowance for me. I am not much in love with that old notion of taking one's place in life by right of conquest alone, as your fighting knights did. Have you never realized that there is a new and better order of knighthood in these days? Good women are responsible for it, I think. I know it used to be that one was not thought a man unless he was in some sort a warrior, a fighter; and his mistress held him no true and ardent lover unless he came to her with the trophies of his ruthless victories over other men. Neither of them seemed to care for what his victories had cost those others—the ignominy and the agony of defeat, and the losses that can never be made good. For the fighter to hold his hand and refuse to strike or to grasp the spoils of his terrible conquests was to court the name of coward or fool. That bred only bitterness and cruelty; the fruits of such victories were always soiled and fouled with blood and tears. I don't know what brought the change. Perhaps the woman began to realize that a man who could be cruel, even to his foes, for the sake of his own glory or to win her favor, was not all knightly; perhaps she began to demand a better quality of manhood. Men are slow to change of themselves; but they will always rise to the standards set by the women they love.

"And doesn't this new standard make its followers more worthy to be the lovers and mates of good women? Do you know what the new standard is? Gentleness and generosity, in place of fierce lust for conflict and the passion for gain. Isn't that a good exchange? And that is what life means to me; it is an ideal that has grown with my thought of you. To take account of others' needs; to give

to them of what I have, instead of wanting to wrest from them; to try to soften the cruelties of life, instead of inflicting them; to be content to serve, instead of demanding that life shall serve my own desires; and to have a sacred regard for all women, even the lowest, instead of considering them as the playthings of my caprices—that is how I have been trying to live, because I thought that was what you would have me to be. Love, in place of desire—that is the difference.

"Do you think it an easy, colorless life, this of mine, free of struggle or effort? Then you don't know that the hardest of all battles a man has to fight is that of subduing himself and bringing his own soul into order, and overcoming his selfish ambitions. That is infinitely harder than to indulge them. But I have overcome, and surrendered. Renunciation—that is the final test of a man's sincerity. I have given up everything that appealed to my selfish desires, because I wanted to be worthy of you; and that was what I thought you would like. I wasn't mistaken, was I?"

"John!" Only that one word; but an epitome of womanly appreciation and sympathetic feeling. "Why haven't we talked of these things before? Why haven't you told me of this?"

"Ah!" he breathed. "That seemed the best part of it—that I should not tell you. Does one do such things that he may talk of them, and turn them into fame? It shames me to have said so much. I confess I wanted you to know—not for my own credit, but that you might see what love of you has done for me; yet I would not have chosen to tell you, had there been another way. Oh, I love you! All the strength I have comes from my love, and is spent in loving. Is that so hard to

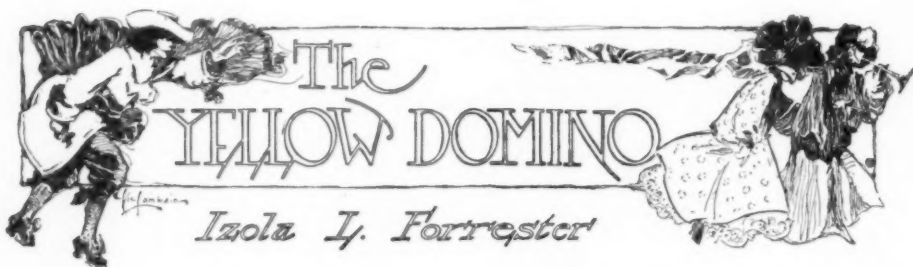
believe? Won't you believe it, sweetheart?"

Her eyes met his in a long, long look that set his blood to singing in his brain; and her hand, lying in his, trembled with her great agitation; but she did not speak.

"Margaret, I am waiting," he said,

with gentle insistence. She pressed his hand for a moment against her flushed cheek; then touched it, ever so lightly, with her lips, clinging to it; and her answer came in a whisper that was half a laugh and half a sob.

"My knight! My true knight!"



Carnival time? But yes, m'sieur, such as it is, it is carnival. Pretty girls, gilded floats, clowns, and confetti, it is the modern carnival, but the spirit is gone. In the old time, ah, m'sieur, it was good to be young then, as I was, and be led a dance through a whirling crowd by the twirl of a cerise domino, or a lilting glance from behind a satin mask. Those were days—

Another glass, m'sieur? It is joy, is it not, to sit in old Michel's cafetière, and watch the sun dance on the sanded floor, to dream, and drink his wine—it is good wine, this, from the valley of the Loire. See how it clings to the side of the glass like golden oil. Not the vile Mexican fire they sell yonder at Planchette's.

Golden sunshine, golden wine, golden hair, golden coin. There is a magic charm in yellow, m'sieur. Ah, but there is. I know. Red is bewitching; it is daring, inspiring. But yellow—it enthuses, tantalizes, lulls.

I saw fifty laughing, dancing, red dominoes flit by me that night, and stood at my post like a philosopher in brown until she came, in yellow. It

was over in La Follette Square, where the fountain is, you know. The parade makes a turn south there. You will see it to-night.

She turned her head and looked at me. I was standing on old Madame L'Hommedieu's steps. The wide stone ones, with the griffin flower urns at the sides. One can see well from there. Twice I saw her. She came slowly while the others hurried. Her mask was three-quarters length. One could see only her chin and the curve of her cheek. But a chin, ah, m'sieur, like a pear it was, a little rounded pear, and cleft at the point in a dimple.

The third time she passed, I followed. A burly clown lurched forward to give her ear a sly pinch, and I struck him aside, and put my arm around her. Protectively, m'sieur, merely protectively. And she shrank closer to me, and once when the crowd swayed roughly, she laid her hand on my arm.

"The Yellow Domino is tired?" I asked, wishing that I might see her eyes under the light.

"I have lost my way," she said,



"I raised my mask and laughed down at her."

softly. "I seek a purple domino. It has a gold fleur-de-lis on the right shoulder, like this."

I saw that she wore one on her own shoulder, a purple one. One does not like such a blow at the first onslaught. To be told that one's enchantress seeks another. I was silent and piqued.

Presently she spoke again, "You must assist me to find him. I do not know my way. The lights are blinding, and the crowd is terrible. You were quiet and apart from it. I was sure you were old and kind—"

I had just turned twenty-three, and my heart beat like the clapper in a fire-bell.

"I was to find him there, where you stood, beside the stone griffins," she added. "Let us go back to them."

A carnival rendezvous, and I the

elderly, kind-hearted protector of the lovers. I laughed, and pressed the hand that lay upon my arm. Reassuringly, m'sieur. But yes, and respectfully, O, most respectfully. And as we neared the stone steps, I saw the purple domino waiting.

"He is yonder," I said. "What reward is mine?"

She hesitated.

"I have nothing to give you," she said, softly, "save this as a remembrance for your kindness."

As she laid the purple fleur-de-lis in my hand, I raised my mask and laughed down at her, and as I live, when she looked into my face, she gathered the yellow domino about her and ran from me, ran to Madame L'Hommedieu's steps, and joined the purple cavalier.

And I ran, too. Who would not? They slipped into the crowd, this way

and that, and I after them. She knew, too, for once she turned and saw me, and nearly fell, but his arm bore her up, and away they flew again.

It is hard to run with confetti blinding you, and voices calling, here, there, everywhere, for there were bright eyes that knew

a chin, such a little chin, dainty, and pointed, like Columbine's, in a Cherêt poster—I would have followed it to the end of the world that night.

For nearly an hour I wandered, and then at last I saw her ahead of me. She was alone, and I knew her at once. The yellow domino, the turn of the head, the piquant tilt of the adorable chin. She saw me, and did



"In the carnival time, it was good to be young, as I was."

Michel even behind a mask. Tall I was, m'sieur, and broad-shouldered. And she, the yellow domino, had called me old. I laughed and ran on faster. I would show her. They had turned a corner, and when I reached it, a fool of a Faust got in my way, and we both went sprawling. When I found my feet again, the two had vanished. Perhaps if it had not been for the chin I might have given her up. But

not run. And I laughed. She had tired of her purple cavalier. She remembered the face behind the mask, the face she had thought old.

Ah, it was a good face those days, m'sieur. The girls could tell you. Musette, and little 'Toinette, and Pourquoi Marie with the round eyes, and beautiful Mamzelle Marjorlaine, the L'Hommedieu heiress, even she has smiled at me from her carriage

when I wished her "bon jour" of a bright morning. Dead m'sieur. All dead. Only little Musette. Where? My wife, Madame Michel. An angel, m'sieur, but somewhat stout. But a cook! Those patés you eat, are they not celestial? With a touch of tabasco they are better. A mere touch. So.

And she led me on. The yellow domino, I mean. A flirt of her head, a shrug of her shoulders, a turn of her chin. Ah, how do they do it, m'sieur? Voila! Those birds fluttering in the sand and the sunshine yonder. See the small brown one that coquettes with such grace. It is the same trick.

And at last, when my legs ached, and I swore I would go no farther, she faltered, and I caught her, right in the shelter of the Josephine arcade, just in the shadow this side, close against the old stone wall, as if she thought I would pass on without seeing her. It was glorious. Just beyond the noise and the crowd and the confetti. I slipped off my mask and laughed down at her.

"Has the yellow domino no reward for one so faithful?" I asked, and she smiled back at me, and raised her face. In an instant I had slipped back the satin mask, and mon dieu, m'sieur, it was a boy!

A beardless, laughing, pink-cheeked devil of a boy, who even as I stared at him in stupefied amazement, shouted out the story of my folly to the crowd,

as he pirouetted out into the street like Harlequin gone mad. And they swept me along with them, and tumbled and buffeted me until I escaped into the square, and hid among the flowers at the fountain.

But it was a woman before. It was, m'sieur. The voice was low and caressing. A woman's, I swear. And the hand on my arm. It was soft and small, a sea-shell of a hand, palm pink. I do not know. It is a mystery. Next morning, Musette gossipped over the morning-glory vines to me, and said that Toinette said, that at market it was said, that M'sieur le Maire's little daughter, Barbe, from the convent at La Therese with her sweetheart, the American artist who comes to paint our Mardi Gras. And Musette said that Barbe's brother, the imp, Jules, was drinking their health all over the town, with a yellow domino thrown over his shoulder.

I do not know. Still tongues are best. The domino was the same. There was the mark on it where she had torn off the purple fleur-de-lis for me. And such a chin! Ah, m'sieur, I saw Madame Barbe when she came back to claim her father's estate. It was a double chin then, forty years after.

Another plate of patés, m'sieur, fresh and hot from the fire? Surely. Musette is calling. Ah, it was a chin! Coming, life of me.



Aunt Marvelous

BY HARRIET A. NASH

J. H. Murdock, first selectman of Plainville, knocked gently upon the worn panel of the Widow Welcomb's green front door. Then, without waiting for response, he turned the brass knob and ushered himself through the tiny hall. The sitting-room was chilly; the caller, giving a critical glance at the shining stove, could detect no sign of fire therein. But the autumn sunshine streamed through the low window, enveloping the erect figure in its high-backed chair, and making a spot of warmth upon the rug just large enough to accommodate the yellow cat.

It was evident to Plainville's leading citizen that his knock had not been loud enough. Mrs. Welcomb's lap was piled high with woolen braids, and her feet were deeply buried in a basket filled with strips of the same material.

"Well, now, Joseph Henry," she exclaimed, extricating her feet with some embarrassment, and pushing her own chair back into the corner that she might draw the wooden rocker up to the sunny window, "I never once thought of your getting round so soon."

"I come right over soon as I got your note," replied Joseph Henry, with another glance towards the stove, and a sudden foreboding. Could it be possible? All Plainville had believed the Widow Welcomb in comfortable circumstances, yet surely there was no fire in the room, and the slender woman opposite him looked blue and pinched as if food had not been too abundant. This was Joseph Henry's second term as selectman

and experience had taught him much. He sat in uncomfortable silence while his hostess chatted easily of the crops and the weather, wondering all the while just how he could best approach the subject upon his mind, and wishing with all his heart that he had brought Mary Ellen along; women somehow had more tact, he reflected.

"Aunt Marvelous," he demanded, breaking in abruptly upon her account of long past winters, with their surprising records for depth of snow, "are you out of wood?" The color mounted to his own face as he put the question, but Mrs. Welcomb nodded.

"That's why I sent for you, Joseph Henry," she answered, cheerily. "'Tisn't wood alone, either, but most things else. There's a great satisfaction in seeing things come out even. It always seemed poor management to me to have your bread outlast your butter. 'Twas a real comfort when the woodshed floor and the bottom of the flour barrel came in sight within twenty-four hours of each other. And now, Joseph Henry, I want to go to the poor-farm."

Joseph Henry sat in shocked silence staring through the window at the heap of ruins across the yard, where once the comfortable farmhouse of the Welcomb family had stood. A charred tree trunk, around which wild clematis now twined, told the story of the old house's destruction. The picture of a strong, kindly man, and a sweet-faced woman of middle age, framed in the vanished doorway, rose suddenly before Joseph Henry's misty eyes. His voice was husky as he replied.

"Aunt Marvelous, I never dreamed of this."

"No," replied the Widow Welcomb, serenely, "I've had it on my own mind for some time past, but there didn't seem any call to advertise it beforehand. So long as I could get along without help, I hadn't any right to ask, though I'm not denying I've cast longing glances across the valley on many a stormy night these past two winters. Now the last cent is gone, and the place covered with a mortgage, I can go with a clear conscience."

"But, Aunt Welcomb," protested the young man, vehemently, "there must be some other way. Surely your husband's nephews would not allow this."

He rose and paced the floor restlessly.

"That's one thing I want everybody to understand," replied Mrs. Welcomb. "I sent for James and Henry and told 'em both just how it was. They both offered free and willing to take me in, but I couldn't feel like being beholden. James took it kind of hard. He said there never was one of the name come on the town, and he didn't want his children slurred at because of it; and he said Mirandy's health was poor and the children was troublesome, and another woman to help around would be handy. So far's Henry went he's got his wife's mother and his own, and I think my refusing was a kind of relief."

The first selectman took another turn across the room, pausing by the cellar door with his hands behind him.

"But the church wouldn't let you—" he began. Mrs. Welcomb interrupted. "Sit down, Joseph Henry," she said, with authority. "You make me nervous tramping about. I've worked this all out in my own mind by the light of past ex-

periences, and I have come to see it clear and plain. The church I belong to is next to family to me, and not only my affections but my forbearance is at its free disposal. There's good hearts and true among my brethren and sisters, and I'm not throwing any slight in what I'm going to say. The church supported Mis' Deacon Farwell for six years before she died. But there was them that back-bit because she wore a silk velvet bonnet made out of an old pelisse, and plenty more grumbled because she wouldn't sell her old chiny and silver spoons."

The spot of sunlight had slowly shifted from the warm rug to the painted floor. The yellow cat rose and rubbed his head appealingly against the caller's foot.

"You've still got neighbors, Aunt Marvelous," the young man declared, with cordial emphasis. "No one of them but would be glad to help. My own house is open to you at any hour for the rest of your life."

Mrs. Welcomb laid her hand caressingly upon his arm. To her he was still the little yellow-haired boy who had run in and out of her kitchen in the old house across the yard.

"Good neighbors I've got, as there is living," she said, thoughtfully. "They're endeared to me by a lifetime of associations in joy and sorrow. The neighbors used to board Mis' Pinkham round among 'em, free-hearted and willing as could be. She never let on but what she liked it, but I'll never forget her last words. I and your mother set up with her the night she died. She says over and over 'I goin' home, never to visit again,' and then just at the last she said, kind of wandering like, 'There may be many mansions there, but I shall keep to my own.'"

Mrs. Welcomb was silent for a moment. Her gaze wandered past her

caller over the ruins of her early home and across the wide valley to where the white walls and great red chimneys of the poor-house rose among leafless trees.

"As for you, Joseph Henry," she continued, presently, "you're a dear good boy, and the Lord'll bless you. But your house hasn't been without a bedridden old person in it since your great Grandsir Hodges was carried helpless across the threshold the day your father and mother were married. No, Joseph Henry, folks have got a wrong idea when they count it a disgrace to go to the poor-farm. To me it's the one spot on earth where I can feel free to go and hold up my head in independence for the rest of my mortal life.

"Hasn't a home been earned for me there? From the time my great-grandfather chopped the trees to build the first meeting-house, up to last week when I sent little Cyrus's cradle over for the poor-house baby, my own family has served the town with free hand and ready spirit. And Cyrus was school committee or road agent or selectman, from the time he cast his first vote on our wedding-day to the hour he died. He was first selectman when that very house was built. Some wanted to build lower, where the land wa'n't so good. But Cyrus said 'No.' The town's poor was a sacred charge and the best was none too good.

"I'll never forget how interested he was and how he come home the day they partitioned off the rooms. He said joking like, you remember how he used to, 'Well, Marvelous, I've got a good big room for you and me on the southwest corner; right where we'll get a good view of home.' Many's the Sunday afternoon Cyrus has walked across lots carrying newspapers for the old folks and hickory-nuts for the children. And many's

the poor-house boy he's helped to a good position in the world."

Joseph Henry rose with softened face.

"You shall have your way, Aunt Marvelous," he said. "The southwest chamber is waiting for a tenant now." He paused before a picture on the wall. "Uncle Cyrus was a good man," he said, reverently.

"There's no boy in Plainville I rather see filling his place than you," replied Mrs. Welcomb. "Must you hurry?"

Joseph Henry, with mind intent upon fuel and flour for present need, thought he must. Aunt Marvelous followed him to the door.

"If it's all the same to you, I'd like to get moved over in time for Thanksgiving," she suggested. "'Twould seem kind of pleasant to be there then."

Joseph Henry mentally made some changes in the poor-house bill of fare as he went down the narrow walk.

"'Twould been a nice thing to lay out a park and build a soldiers' monument, next year," he said, regretfully. "But somehow the town's poor looks different to me this morning, and I calculate that while I have a voice in Plainville affairs, there's going to be more money spent on them."

There was a little flutter of excitement among the inmates of Plainville poor-house when it became known that the Widow Welcomb was coming among them. The half-dozen aged women and four decrepit old men discussed the matter thoroughly in the "old folks" pleasant sitting-room—for the poor-house of cheerless rooms and ill-served food has long since vanished from New England towns.

"I used to know her intimate when we was girls," said old Mrs. Mellen, who had recently drifted back to the care of Plainville after an absence

which covered more than half her lifetime. "But I s'pose she's forgot. I ain't seen her, as I know of, for fifty years."

"I c'n see her now comin' into church on her appearin' out day," added blind Mrs. Meeks. "Who'd ever thought she'd come to such an end as this! They was a handsome couple, and Cyrus Welcomb that bound up in her that you'd believed the ground wa'n't good enough for her to walk on."

"She'll prob'ly be more or less stuck up and dressy," interposed another, fretfully.

One familiar with the place would have noticed some changes on the day of Mrs. Welcomb's arrival. The supper-table was spread with a white cloth in place of the usual oil-cloth, and Joseph Henry had brought over a bouquet of geraniums from Mary Ellen's plants. The men, who ordinarily scorned all elegancies of dress, had each and all donned a collar to do honor to "'Squire Welcomb's widder." The old ladies wore their best white aprons, and Mrs. Mellen, to the admiration of all, crimped her soft white hair and pinned her lace collar with a coral pin—a relic of her girlhood.

"We had 'em alike, but of course she's forgot," she said.

Even the poor-house baby wore a new pink calico dress, and its young mother tied a blue ribbon in her hair for the first time in the long, hopeless year since her respectable brother-in-law had driven her from his door.

Joseph Henry would have taken Aunt Marvelous directly to the southwest chamber, where he and Mary Ellen had set her household treasures with their own hands, but she insisted upon "seeing the family first" and went from one to another, most of whom she had known in years gone by.

"You can't see me, Mrs. Meeks," she said, sorrowfully, taking the blind woman's hand. Mrs. Meeks laughed, delightedly.

"O yes I can!" she answered, eagerly. "You've got on a blue silk dress and a white bonnet with pink roses. And your hair is yellow in long curls. O yes, I see you plain."

When Aunt Marvelous came to Mrs. Mellen she stopped in delighted surprise. "Cynthia Lawrance!" she exclaimed. "She that married a Mellen! If you haven't kept that coral pin all these years and mine was lost years ago. To think I never heard of your coming back to Plainville. But that shows how much a body misses, living alone."

"We moved from pillar to post," replied Mrs. Mellen, drearily, "never stayin' anywhere long enough to gain a residence. So when Josiah died, of course I come on the old town."

Even Joseph Henry could not deny that the southwest chamber was comfortable, with Uncle Cyrus's picture on the wall, and the yellow cat curled up on the foot of the bed. Aunt Marvelous looked the steam radiator over with some curiosity.

"It's a queer contraption," she said, "but it throws the heat well. I guess I sha'n't have to sit with my feet in the rag basket here."

"I don't want no extry pay," protested Joel Thompson, the overseer, when Joseph Henry apologized for some improvements a few months later. "We more'n make up for any extry work in peace and contentment. Before you brought Mis' Welcomb here they was bickerin' and complainin' half the time. Now, seein' how she looks at it, they've got an idea that what's good enough for her is actually too good for them. True enough it is, too. Then she's got a sort of a way with her that'll kind of smooth out hard feelin's and make

everybody feel comfortable and act agreeable. They dress up afternoons, and visit back and forth, as if they was somebody. I only wish the Lord would send a Widder Welcomb to every poor-house."

Aunt Marvelous had been three years at the Plainville poor-farm. One or two of the older people had dropped away; the baby of little Cyrus's cradle had been adopted by a childless couple of large hearts, and its mother was well established through Mary Ellen's efforts in a village dressmaking shop. But Cynthia Mellen still exchanged happy reminiscences with her girlhood friend, and blind Mrs. Meeks still told the tale in which Aunt Marvelous's heart secretly delighted, of her appearing out.

"Cyrus was a grand lookin' man, and as good as he was handsome," Mrs. Meeks always ended.

Joseph Henry Murdock, still first selectman, drove up to the poor-house one wintry afternoon and sought the southwest chamber in some excitement. It was the twenty-fourth of December, and the whole house was fragrant with preparations for the morrow's festivities, from the Christmas tree in the "old folks' room" to the laden shelves of the pantry. Mrs. Welcomb, who had thrown out mysterious hints of important work to be completed in secret, was quite alone in her room this afternoon setting tremulous but happy stitches in the simple gifts she had prepared for the other members of "her family."

"Aunt Marvelous," announced Joseph Henry, quite forgetful of all Mary Ellen's injunctions to "break it gently," "you're a rich woman!"

Mrs. Welcomb looked contentedly about her.

"Yes, Joseph Henry," she assented, cheerily, "I believe I am."

"But literally I mean," replied the first selectman, eagerly. "You remember that note for two thousand which Uncle Cyrus held against Daniel Hodges?"

Mrs. Welcomb looked thoughtful. "I remember," she said. "Cyrus took it dreadful hard. He didn't mind losin' the money so bad, but he hated terribly to be cheated. And he always had a feeling to his dying day that Daniel meant to cheat him from the start. 'Twas a great blow to Cyrus."

"The scoundrel!" exclaimed Joseph Henry; "but he's paid it, Aunt Marvelous, in full with interest."

The Widow Welcomb dropped her work upon her lap. Her eyes shone.

"You don't mean it!" she exclaimed, delightedly. "How I do wish Cyrus could know. I always sort of hoped it would be proved to us after all that Daniel didn't mean to be dishonest. An' so his heart has been softened to do the right thing after all. What a Christmas present that would be to Cyrus if he only knew. Well, perhaps he does. How did it come about, Joseph Henry?"

Joseph Henry smiled.

"Through the channel of the law," he answered, with a note of pride in the successful management of the affair. "I brought suit against him last term of court in your name."

Mrs. Welcomb leaned back in her chair. The delighted expression upon her face gave place to one of blank dismay.

"Joseph Henry Murdock," she said, solemnly, "do you mean to tell me that you took the law on a fellow-being—and in my name? Why, Joseph Henry, what *would* your mother say? There never was a woman lived who was so set against the law as she was. She's told me many a time that she'd see your

father lose every cent he had on earth rather'n give her consent for him to take the law. And now to think her only son has been led through me to do such a revengeful act. Oh, Joseph Henry!"

Joseph Henry looked guilty.

"I hope you don't think Uncle Cyrus would have disapproved," he suggested, meekly.

Aunt Marvelous shook her head.

"I can't tell," she answered, gloomily. "Cyrus was a man who handled a good deal of business, first and last, and things like that look different to men from what they do to women. Though I don't remember that Cyrus ever went so far as to take the law himself. Like enough he wouldn't have blamed you, though I'm not saying he would advise it. But it's your mother I'm thinking of, Joseph Henry. I don't know what she'd say."

"I hope she'd say," replied the first selectman, stoutly, "that I had merely done my duty as a man and a citizen, not to let a well-to-do scoundrel cheat a lonely woman. There may be things in my life that'll make me shrink from looking my mother in the face when I join her on the other side, if such a streak of luck should come to me at the end; but By Jupiter, Aunt Marvelous, this ain't going to be one of them!"

Aunt Marvelous made an effort to look satisfied.

"You meant well, Joseph Henry," she said.

"And now," he continued, cheerily, "just think of the result for a little. I have deposited to-day in the Plainville Savings Bank thirty-five hundred dollars. You needn't stay here another hour, but have a cozy little home of your own, with a maid to wait on you. Would an upstairs rent strike you pleasantly, or shall it be a little cottage by yourself?"

Over the Widow Welcomb's face there crept a piteous look of despair.

"Do you mean that I must go away, Joseph Henry?" she asked with trembling lip. "Away from here, where I thought I had come to stay. With the old house gone, what other place than this could ever be home to me, when Cyrus planned it himself, and drew the plan out on the old kitchen table. Out of the south window I can see the old place, and the trees we planted together, and out of the west one the cemetery with the marble lamb over little Cyrus's grave. Can you find a little cottage or an upstairs rent in all Plainville that will do as much?"

In vain Joseph Henry argued and expostulated, only to yield at last as he had yielded three years before.

"But what will you do with the money?" he questioned.

Mrs. Welcomb considered. "I will give it to the town," she announced with dignity. "A Christmas present from Cyrus and me."

"Will it, you mean," replied the first selectman, thoughtfully. "That might not be a bad idea, if you really are determined not to use it yourself."

"No, give it," returned Aunt Marvelous, firmly. "I know little of business, Joseph Henry, but I know the difference between giving money and seeing it spent as you want, and willing it for lawyers to break and squabble over."

Advice and argument were useless. Even when next morning Joseph Henry brought a lawyer to assist him, Mrs. Welcomb refused to listen.

"Now, Joseph Henry," she said, decidedly, at last, "you had all the voice in getting of this money and I'm going to have my way in spending of it. Don't interrupt me again, but listen while I tell Mr. Mortimer just how I want it spent—or rather how Cyrus would have spent it.

First of all I want a piazza and a bay-window on this house—Cyrus planned for both, but the money gave out. Then after that you shall have half that's left for that soldiers' monument you used to want so bad, and the other half shall go towards a town library, which Cyrus used to yearn after. You can put in the wheretos and otherwises as the law demands, Mr. Mortimer, but in plain language that is what I want."

Half an hour later she signed the legal transfer with unfaltering hand, while the overseer and his wife looked on with deep interest, and Joseph Henry still protested beneath his breath.

Aunt Marvelous detained the first selectman after the others had left the room. "Here's a pair of wrist-lets I knit for your Christmas present, Joseph Henry," she said, fondly. "And I want to tell you that I think everything has been done just as Cyrus would wish. It come to me last night after you'd gone what he often used to say; 'The law's a last resort,' he said, 'but better that than see injustice done.' Bless you, Joseph Henry. You're a dear good boy, and so long as the Lord sets men like you over town affairs, there's many lesser privileges than being paupers."

The Disbanding of the Aline Society

BY WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE

Membership in the Aline Society was limited to twelve, and nobody was eligible to election except men who had proposed to the young woman whose name the club bore. Vacancies (due to the ravages of death and marriage) were filled by a vote of the remaining eleven, a unanimous vote being necessary to an election.

By virtue of having proposed oftenest and having begun earliest, Jim Hathaway was president. He proposed irregularly, but never let more than three months elapse without speaking. Then there was young Marsden, a rising attorney, who lacked nothing but clients and a knowledge of the law; Jack Hollinsworth, the newspaper free lance, who had a standing difference of opinion with magazine editors as to whether he could write fiction; Tommie Smith,

good fellow from the head to the heel of him despite the fact that he was a millionaire; Jerry Winston, with a doctor's degree from Columbia and a past master's degree from the school of life in the art of flirting; and seven other young fellows, clean cut as one would care to meet. Not a bore among them; and not one who showed the first symptoms of being a cad. It was these two facts that made the society a possibility. Outside of the twelve, nobody knew of the society's existence, except the divinity they worshiped—and she was immensely proud of it, as she had a right to be.

There came a time when Jerry Winston fell from grace. A nice girl with pink and white cheeks was the cause of it. At least she was the immediate cause. Winston himself was guilty of contributory negligence

in not fleeing while there was yet time, and a fine lonely beach and moonlight nights were *particeps criminis*. Of course there were hundreds of other people on the beach, but as neither Jerry nor the girl had eyes or ears for them it did not matter. His fellow-members of the society assisted at the obsequies jauntily, but each of them wore a little bit of crape beneath the lapel of his dress-coat. A lad named Jack Harley, just out of college, was elected to fill the vacancy due to Winston's untimely taking-off.

Young Harley was very much eligible to membership. If he had cried in the market-place "I go a-wooing," his purpose had not been more patent to his amused clubmates. He hadn't a copper to call his own; his face was so homely that it was positively attractive; he was rather painfully callow at times. But he went after the heiress as abruptly and as insistently as he had been wont to smash the enemy's foot-ball interference. When he got his big shoulders into play something had to give. He was cheerfully unconscious of the fact that the betting was a hundred to one against him, and if he had known it he wouldn't have minded in the least. Nor would he have minded that the world at large was uncharitably distrustful of his motives. It was Aline he wanted, not her coupons; and it didn't matter a rap what outsiders thought about it.

The point about Harley was that he didn't know when he was beaten. The other fellows wooed her with a premonition of defeat. Their manner suggested an apology for daring to aspire to such a stunning combination of wealth and beauty. But Harley's foot-ball had taught him that it is better to keep on playing until the referee calls "Time," and that the game is never lost until the last scrim-

mage is over. To the casual observer, at least, he was cheerfully oblivious of any possibility of failure. It wasn't that he ever said so; he simply beamed it from his mobile, homely face.

Once a year, on her birthday, the Aline Club met at the rooms of the president and dined in state. The members appeared in dress and made a function out of the affair. About four months after Harley was voted into membership, the committee began making preparations for the celebration of the event. Meanwhile Harley had been playing havoc with the predictions of his fellow-clubmen. They had at first been amused at his serene confidence and undeviating perseverance, had waited with composure for the inevitable result, and had finally dropped into an attitude of uneasy expectancy. The question of Aline's mental attitude was beginning to worry them. It was hardly conceivable that the cub would win where they had all failed. Still he certainly did seem to be making the running.

In point of fact, Aline herself was as much disturbed as her admirers and her relatives. Jack Harley alone was serenely at his ease regarding the outcome. The young woman had at first been frankly amused at his open devotion. The fact of the devotion was an old story, but the quality of it was delightfully fresh. She couldn't help feeling that it was a bit cheeky for the boy (he was only a year her senior) to elbow aside the millionaires and other "prominent citizens" who got in his way.

All warnings were quite lost on him. Her mother might look at this youth out of her *pince-nez* in her severest manner without abating one jot his genial smile. He had the knack of stationing himself at Aline's side and holding his ground against all comers. But whether it was

cheeky or not, the pure nerve of the youth fascinated her. It was delightful to be made love to openly and frankly, just as if she had been any country girl. There was an insistent quality, something big and forceful, about him that stayed with her after he had gone. She got to thinking of him more than she wanted to, and there was always something of admiration in her thoughts of him.

For one thing, he was not afraid of her. Because she was rich and beautiful and looked haughty, most men feared; but Jack Harley was as free and easy with her, in his gentlemanly way, as if she had been a freckle-faced, bare-foot, snub-nosed, country girl.

Because he was so much in her mind, Aline, who really hadn't the least desire to fall in love with this ineligible, began to snub him. Harley laughed at her cheerfully, and refused to recognize the fact. Really, she admitted to herself with a little embarrassed laugh, she didn't know what to do with him—unless she married him to get rid of him.

To be tardy at the Aline Club on the night of the great birthday banquet was the one unforgivable offense. Naturally when the hour arrived and the president counted noses to find that "Cub" Harley's Roman was not of those present, the feeling was prevalent that Master Jack was taking too many liberties for a new member. They sat down to table without him, and he came in,

full of smiling apologies, after the soup. The toast of the evening was always given by the president. The members drank it standing, and then dropped their glasses to the floor. Just before it was given on this occasion, young Harley handed a slip of paper to Hathaway, who rose with the paper still unread.

"To Her," he said, simply.

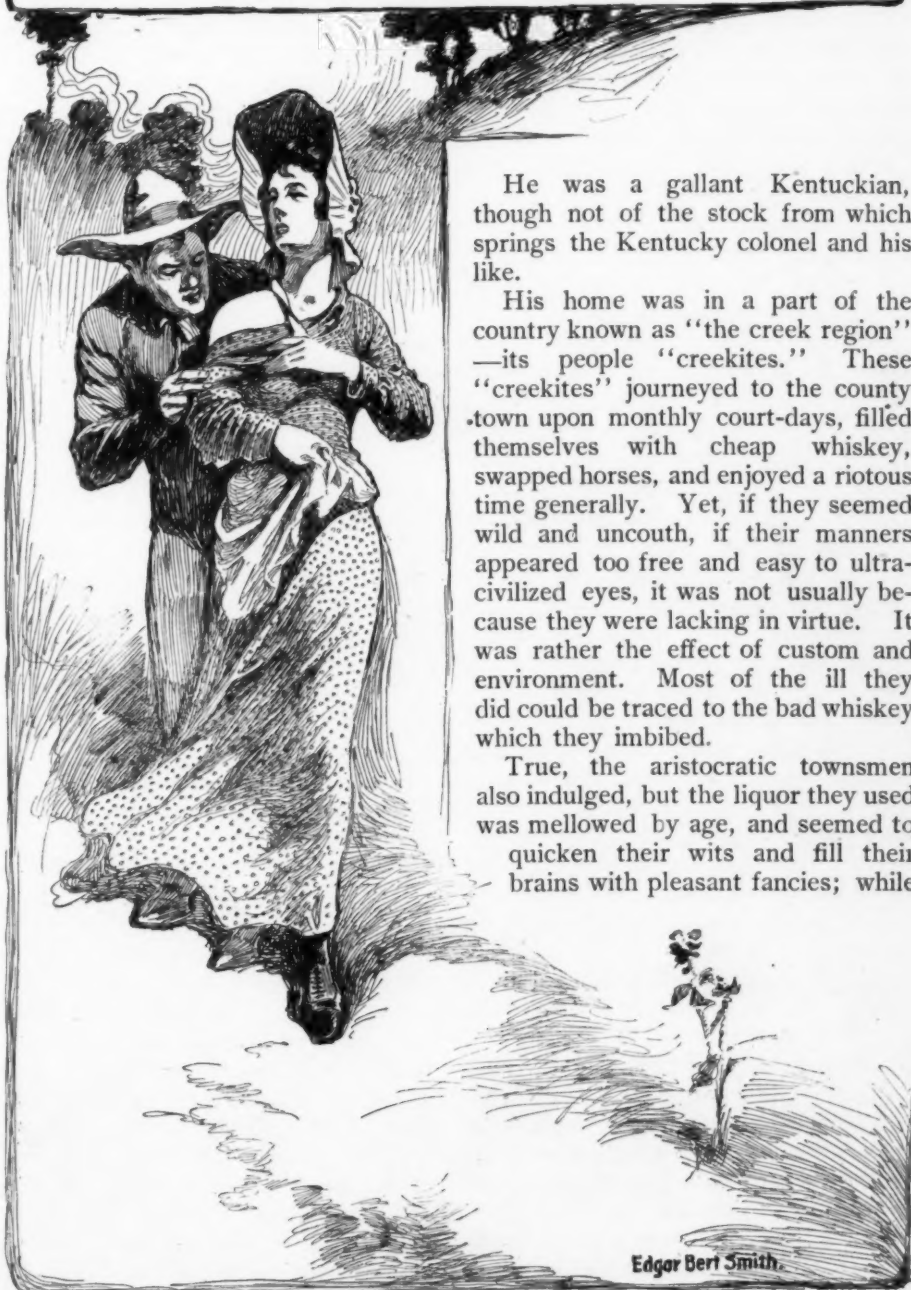
After the toast had been drunk he opened the slip of paper and stared at it as one fascinated. Presently he rose to his feet and said, solemnly: "Gentlemen, the society is disbanded from this evening. I have to inform you that—that Mr. Harley—is to be congratulated. Allow me, Mr. Harley, as the president of the society, to offer you my personal congratulations."

Hathaway shook hands across the table with young Harley, and sat down, smiling a little wistfully. What each man thought has not been told, but what each man did is a matter of record. They gathered around Harley and shook hands with him and wished him all kinds of luck and joy. Then they gathered 'round the fireplace and looked into the glowing coals and sang "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow." After which, no doubt, they went home and looked on a certain photograph of a dark-haired beauty smiling elusively, and then they probably sighed and squared their shoulders in the fashion of men who are hard hit, but not down.



A KENTUCKY GALLANT

By C.S. VALENTINE



He was a gallant Kentuckian, though not of the stock from which springs the Kentucky colonel and his like.

His home was in a part of the country known as "the creek region"—its people "creekites." These "creekites" journeyed to the county town upon monthly court-days, filled themselves with cheap whiskey, swapped horses, and enjoyed a riotous time generally. Yet, if they seemed wild and uncouth, if their manners appeared too free and easy to ultra-civilized eyes, it was not usually because they were lacking in virtue. It was rather the effect of custom and environment. Most of the ill they did could be traced to the bad whiskey which they imbibed.

True, the aristocratic townsmen also indulged, but the liquor they used was mellowed by age, and seemed to quicken their wits and fill their brains with pleasant fancies; while

"She drew her cotton gown down from her round shoulder"

the stuff the "creekites" poured down their throats, adulterated with drugs and biting acids, leaped through their veins like quicksilver, setting their blood aflame and awaking evil passions. Small wonder, then, that the most of them, from the boy of fourteen to the white-haired grandsire, left town in a whooping, swearing crowd, reeling in their saddles, stopping only to pass around the bottles saved for the homeward trip.

To this tribe belonged our hero, christened Solomon by the cynical old doctor who assisted at his birth, but known as Sol by his little world. Sol's father was killed in a drunken row one court-day, when the boy was small, and his mother struggled on until he reached the age of eighteen and was a man, according to creek reckoning. Then she gave up the struggle.

Sol truly mourned for her, but his grief was somewhat mitigated by the handsome funeral which the Burial Association, of which she was a member, gave her. It was the first funeral conducted by the Association in the creek region, and is even yet remembered as a great event, the span of snow-white horses with their somber trappings, the cloth-draped casket with shining silver handles, and the fine merino shroud, ruffled with silk, being endless sources of admiration to the simple folk.

After his mother's death Sol lived alone in his little cabin, which was set, like a tiny oasis, in a desert of tobacco-fields; sometimes he had help with his housekeeping—gay, light-hearted, irresponsible companions, of easy morals, who made boisterous cheer for him when he returned from the fields. He was such a good-natured, kind-hearted young fellow that all the women-folk made much of him, and the creek belles were all in love with him and would have

married him, gladly. But until he was twenty-one Sol had never been seriously in love, and even then had a great aversion to matrimonial fetters.

The two girls upon whom his fancy dwelt most fondly were as unlike in looks and ways as two girls could well be. Kate attracted him with her bold, dark beauty, fine figure, and free manners; while Rosie's delicate prettiness, quiet, gentle disposition, and innate refinement charmed him quite as much. But as for marrying either—well, he told himself, not yet, at least. He could make love to both and still remain free.

Sol's thoughts were not of things feminine when he started out to walk to the little store at the mouth of the creek, one gladsome spring morning. He scarce noticed the tender green garment with which nature had clothed the brown earth, nor gave attentive ear to the gay songs of the feathered musicians who rioted in the air above him, for he was brooding over a scheme for vengeance.

Instead of riding his pretty little mare, Milly, as was customary when he went for supplies, he was obliged to walk, as the spirited young animal no longer belonged to him. On his last court-day jaunt he had swapped this, his most precious possession, to a fellow "creekite" who took advantage of Sol's unusually befuddled condition to obtain the mare, giving in return a couple of dollars and a worn-out saddle. It is but just to the trader to state that Sol was hilariously well pleased with the trade, until the next morning, when returning consciousness of what had occurred brought with it an unquenchable desire to get even with his wily comrade and recover possession of Milly.

One scheme after another came into his head as he walked along, and having no thought of Rosie, he was much surprised to see that young woman

approaching him, waving a small bundle which she carried, to attract his attention. As she came nearer he saw that her cheeks were much flushed and bore the imprint of tears. Hastening to meet her, he encircled her with his arm as he inquired with anxious solicitude, "What's the matter, Rosie, honey?"

"Step-mammy done got her back up an' guv me the mos' outdashus lammin'."

The girl's voice broke into sobs at the remembrance of the wrongs she had suffered, and she nestled her small person closer to Sol as she continued, while he tenderly wiped her falling tears away, "I was on my way to you all's house, Sol."

Sol was startled. A subconscious thought of what that visit portended beat painfully in his brain, and he stopped mopping up her tears to ask, with an awkward assumption of curiosity, "What you goin' thar fur, honey?"

"Step-mammy 'lowed you hadn't no entenshun uv marryin' me. She sez 'Sol's jest projecken roun', she sez. I—I knowed you warn't foolin' when you tole me you loved me, Sol, only you wuzen't ready to marry twill you sold yer crap. But I made up my min' I'd come and tell you I'm ready now, an' don't want no weddin' trip."

Sol withdrew his arm a little in thoughtful silence.

"Reckon you'd better go back home, Rosie," he said, gently.

"I *kain't* go back, Sol. Looky here." With the characteristic unconventionality of the region she drew down the cotton gown from her round shoulder, exposing to his horrified view the flesh, red and angry in some spots, already dark in others where the blood had settled. It was a sight to make one rage with anger against the creature who had inflicted such injuries.

"Step-mammy done it," Rosie said, briefly, with lips all a-quiver.

"The dev'lish ole varmint," cried Sol, wrathfully. Ef I had her by the neck—" He checked himself and leaned over her with soft cries of pity.

"You pore little thing!" he exclaimed, and bending down, kissed the discolored flesh. His heart swelled within him, and that moment the spirit of true knighthood was born in this native of the creek region. He felt that he must protect this loving, helpless little being, must insure that in future her delicate form should never know the indignity of blows. There was but one way out of the trouble—he must marry her. There was no alternative in his mind.

Sol had money in his pockets, enough to buy the license and pay the preacher. This money had been saved for the purpose of purchasing a pair of wide-striped trousers and a flaming red tie, which were displayed in the window of the principal store in the county town. He had set his heart upon these articles, but of what use would they be to a sober married man, who would no longer be free to gallivant around the country? He thought of Kate. Pulling himself together with an audible sigh, he resigned himself to his fate, and turned his gaze upon Rosie.

Sol's silence had awakened doubts which her step-mother's taunts had failed to arouse, and when he sighed, the girl withdrew from his loosened embrace and regarded him with fear and darkened eyes.

"Sol," she cried, her voice sharp with the agony of the thought, "wuz step-mammy right? Didn't you mean—" Sol impulsively drew her closer to him.

"Step-mammy be damn!" he said, vigorously. "Uv course I meant it, sweetness. I wuz jest studyin'

whuther yore leetle feet cud tote you to town to the preacher's."

Rosie gave a joyous cry. "To town?" she laughed, gayly. "Why, Sol, they'd tote me to the end uv th' yerth ef you wuz walkin' by me."

Again she melted to tears, now at the happy prospect before her.

Again, and this time with a proud air of possession, he wiped the tears from her pretty eyes; then taking hold of each other's hands they started down the golden pathway of life together, the spire of the distant court-house tower, seen dimly through a happy haze, beckoning them on.

The Hour Before the Dawn

BY KATHARINE HOLLAND BROWN

Carteret handed his suit-case to the beaming porter, and stepped out of the cab. The events of the morning still pressed on him so closely that he hardly noticed the clerk's greeting as he entered the office. To the man's deferential question, "You wish a suite, as usual, Mr. Carteret?" he nodded assent, without knowing why. When he reached his rooms, he dismissed the hall-boy, and opening a window, he stood and looked out into the sullen February night.

Across the broad street lay Lafayette Square, a shadowy phalanx of leafless trees, pierced here and there by a shaft of light from the Avenue beyond. Through the dense mist he could barely discern the vast dim bulk of the State, War, and Navy Building; the White House beside it could be traced only by the coronal of light across its broad façade. The city below and around him was very quiet; an occasional hansom rolled softly by, the horse's hoofs clicking on the wet asphalt; from somewhere on the floor below there came to him the faint, peevish murmur of a violin. He buried his face in his hands with a great, shivering sigh of relief.

The past four hours had cut him off irrevocably from his life as it had been, he reflected; yes, and from his

life as he had thought that it would be in years to come. It was as if a giant hand had torn him from the easy, opulent world of the every-day, and had flung him through immeasurable spaces upon some blank new planet, a soul alone, save for a memory it must fight down as best it might. Yet, in this quiet, familiar place, he could face the situation, and brace himself for that which was to come.

He felt a contemptuous pity for himself, mingled with a curious sense of elation. Why should he imagine himself so forlorn? Now he was free, to come and go as he pleased, to devote his time to whatever whim might attract him. He could shut himself up in his laboratory for a year, if he chose; he could start for Abyssinia to-morrow, with none to say him nay. Decidedly things were better so, for both of them.

Now that he came to think matters over, he wondered that he had been so shocked, even for the moment. This separation was not the result of a sudden grievance on either side; it was the outgrowth of slow years of friendship cooling into indifference; of indifference chilling to weariness. Not but that he still cared for Constance; she was his wife, the girl that

he had loved and sought and won—was it eight years ago? Eight centuries!

He moved uneasily in his chair. Just eight years it would be, in March. They had gone to St. Augustine in his brother's yacht; then they came back to Washington by rail, for it was threatening weather, and Constance wished to spend Easter at home in Westchester. They had stopped for a day in this very hotel, he remembered. Constance had been rather dismal over the thought of coming home.

"You'll see it won't be the same," she had declared, in response to his hesitating reassurances. "We'll like other people and other things, and that will be the end of it. One can't live up to the honeymoon altitude always."

No, she was right about that. But theirs had lasted wonderfully, it must be admitted. That is, until after the Little Man died. He tried not to think of that, but the solemn baby face rose inexorably before his eyes.

The Davenports, their nearest neighbors at Chevy Chase, were giving a dinner that night, and he and Constance had accepted. The Little Man was fretting and feverish, and Constance felt very reluctant about leaving him. She came downstairs, dressed for the evening, but with an anxious face.

"I don't like to leave him, Robert," she said. "He isn't well. The doctor and the nurse say it's only a cold, but—can't you ask Sally Elliott to go in my place, and explain how it is to Mrs. Davenport? She will forgive me, I know."

But Robert had expostulated. Sally Elliott would not wish to go unasked, even to oblige them. The Davenports were "new people," who would be embarrassed by any hitch; and the end was, that Constance flung

on her cloak and followed him to the carriage, still protesting.

Not a shred of recollection of the dinner itself remained in his memory. But he need not close his eyes to see his wife's terrible tearless face when she snatched her dying baby from the doctor's arms and sprang with it to the light, prying into the little whitening features for some gleam of hope. It stabbed him the deeper to remember that she had neither looked nor breathed reproach to him. Her soul was too spent with grief to harbor bitterness.

He had tried his clumsy best to comfort her. He urged her to travel with him. Constance refused to leave Chevy Chase for a day. He bought her rugs and flowers and trinkets for the pretty home she had so loved to beautify; but the porcelains were never unpacked, and the flowers all went to the little violet-banked space in Westchester. He coaxed her into his laboratory, and strove, poor soul, to interest her in his analyses of soils; Constance followed him about, listening to his labored explanations with a dull patience that smothered his efforts like snow on flame.

At last, when the family were in despair, Constance suddenly brought about her own diversion. She put aside her grief as swiftly as if it had been some trifling obstacle in her path, and flung herself into the gayeties of the winter season with a passionate energy which mystified her people as much as it relieved them. And oddly enough, she did not seem to tire of her strange solace. She had the third floor remodeled into a ball-room, thus sweeping away the sunny nursery where the Little Man had spent his short days; she bought billiard and pool tables, she laid out tennis-courts, and built bowling-alleys.

The house was always overflowing with guests. Men whom Carteret

scarcely knew nodded to him across the breakfast-table, and smoked his cigars in the library. Women whom he knew by hearsay alone wandered through his conservatories, and exclaimed over his Oriental embroideries.

For Carteret had not followed his wife's lead. During the first year or so, he attended her conscientiously from dinner to opera, from opera to dance; but as the months went on, he stayed at home more and more. He found it impossible to do fair work in the laboratory after a night of promiscuous feasting and debatable mirth; her brothers were always ready to take her about, and she seemed to feel no difference. So Carteret hung over his stands of test-tubes, or dozed in the library, while Constance led the season, from Easter back to Mardi-Gras.

It was not until Keene Wallace came that Carteret realized how desperate a gap lay between them. He knew vaguely that Constance tired him now-a-days, and he felt that he irritated her. They seldom met, save in the presence of guests, and while Constance was always her serene self, he felt a teasing restraint in her presence. It was as if each beheld in the mind of the other some painful thought, which they feared might voice itself, despite their struggles to keep silence. When Wallace became a constant visitor at the house, its demand for expression served to thrust them farther and farther apart. Carteret believed himself too indifferent to be jealous; moreover, he had no reason to fancy that Constance held the young Englishman in special favor. Constance herself seemed to care for nothing, save to hunt some new excitement. Yet the shadow of that thought darkened, till it seemed a palpable barrier between husband and wife.

And now, at last, the crash had come. Carteret, reviewing the situation as he sat in the hotel window, felt himself a dispassionate, even a critical, spectator at the presentation of his sorry tragedy. Her younger brother had precipitated the climax, in a frantic letter to him the night before.

"For God's sake, Robert, make Con stop, before she ruins everything. She's going it blind, just as you are, you old fool, and before you know it you'll both be clear over the edge. For the sake of the family, if not for yourselves, you've got to interfere. And if you don't tell Con, I will."

It was a young thing for the boy to do, Carteret reflected; still, the fact that he should have seen the need of such a warning made him feel preposterously aggrieved. He tried to complete the experiment on which he was working; but the gases burned his throat, and the apparatus was abominably out of gear. Finally he went to Constance, and asked her not to invite Wallace to the house again. "Just a notion of mine, you know," he added, lamely.

Constance laid down her pen and thrust the heap of notes aside. "You're sure it's your own notion—and wish, Rob?" she asked.

Carteret gasped. "I—why, no. I'd never have thought of it; it's immaterial to me whom you ask here, so long as you enjoy having them, my dear girl. But Tom thinks—"

"Tom! So he is the one who cares—the only one! Robert, isn't it about time we talked things over frankly? Isn't it about time that we broke off this—this pretense?"

Carteret only stared back at her for answer.

"I mean—all of it," she went on, swiftly. "We don't really care for each other any longer; we have no

tastes in common. I worry you with my dinners and dances and fads—"

"You could never worry me, Constance," interrupted her husband. Constance bit her lip.

"You always did say the nice thing, Rob. But—O I wish you would go, or else let me go! We have plenty of friends, and interests of our own, we don't need each other; and can't you see how much better it would be for you? I don't analyze these things; I'm no scientist. But I do see that I don't make you happy. And that's reason enough."

A maid entered at that moment, and Carteret went away. He recalled how the hall floor had undulated under him as he walked down to the library. He would not let himself be surprised at the turn things had taken; yet he felt a shivering dread of the task that loomed before him.

It was impossible to make plans in the midst of those happy, clamorous guests. He was forced to devote his day to a party of visitors who had stopped off between trains on their way south. He came into Washington with them late in the afternoon, and listened to their farewell panegyrics on his delightful home and his adorable wife with a smiling face. This, then, was his first opportunity to think undisturbed.

But he was desperately tired, body and soul, and the instinctive dread of that which he must do was increased by his weariness. He threw off his coat and flung himself on the couch for a moment's rest. "An hour more or less won't make any difference now," he thought, drowsily. And thus he fell asleep.

He had walked for hours along the lonely road to Chevy Chase, and still it grew no lighter, though surely the dawn would come soon. All around him the fields lay dark and yet famil-

iar, like a veiled face we know, but cannot see. The mists rose thick from the ditches on either side; there shone no light of star nor moon, but a wan, gray glimmer far over the eastern hills promised the coming day.

But it had been so long! His heart sank faint within him, his throat burned dry as with parching dust. He longed to fling himself on the wet grass, if only for a moment, to quiet his trembling limbs. But always at his elbow lurked that Terror which had driven him on, all the black night; a haunting shape, which tortured him the more that he could not see its face. Once he had turned about, taking his courage in both hands; but as he looked up—Good God! How close it was! He ran on, stumbling over the rough ground. He did not try to look again.

Now there wavered over the stark world a paling gleam, as if vast curtains beyond the hills were shifted noiselessly. The clumps of trees stood out in clearer lines; a feather of smoke arose like a beckoning finger from a cottage across the field. Yet he fled on, trembling, for there was no solace in the thought of day; only a quickening dread lest he might see and know That which followed, close behind.

And at last he stood within his own gates, and his wife came out across the dim lawn to meet him. But she neither spoke nor smiled. She came close to him, and lifted her hands with a strange, appealing gesture. And his heart went cold as he remembered how she had turned to him once before with that same piteous movement—when they had taken the Little Man from her arms. He looked down into her beautiful dead face with the purple bruise across the forehead. This, then, was the Horror that had followed him all the way! And as

he would have shrieked her name in his agony, she faded from his arms.

Carteret leaped to his feet, glaring about the darkened room. The perspiration streamed from his hands and face. Where was she? How came he here? He groped his way across the room through the blackness of his dream, which rose like a flood of terror to his lips. When he reached the window, and saw the twinkle of light in the street below, the consciousness that it was all a dream brought no relief. For him it was a dream already true.

Throughout these years they had died to each other by that soul-suicide of mutual indifference. Why should he go back to her, even though his dull eyes saw now how dear, how infinitely precious she was to him? He had forfeited her love by his selfish neglect, he had fretted and tired her always; she herself had said that they were better apart. Yet that swathed, bruised face rose again before his eyes. He rushed down the long stairways and out into the wide, dark avenue.

The chimes were ringing for two o'clock when he stepped from the last pavement to the yielding turf of the roadside. It was a moonless night, cloudy and cold. A fitful wind clattered the leafless trees, and wailed about the low hills, as one who sought, and seeking found but Despair. It was so dark that Carteret stopped from time to time to draw a deeper breath. It seemed as if the black air caught in his throat. He knew his way perfectly, for he had driven over it, day after day; besides, had he not walked those shadowy miles only an hour before? He pushed on past sleeping farmhouses and deserted cottages, up hill and down. And still it grew no lighter.

He did not fear to look behind him

now. The Terror that had hounded his dream no longer oppressed him. Yet in its place arose a new dread, of what he dared not think. "If I am only in time!" rang through his reeling brain. "If I am only in time!"

At last it came, that haggard twilight, glinting over the sodden earth. He quickened his steps through the arch, and across the gloomy park, towards his home. His whole body throbbed with exhaustion, his soul was sick with dread. But he was almost there.

He took the short cut along the birch hollow to the lawn. As he pushed through the last clump to open ground, he looked up towards the house. It lay before him, a heap of smoldering ruin.

So he was not in time! He reeled, clutching at the nearest branch; the blood pounded in his throat. The portent of his dream was written in that drift of char and ashes; the Fear that had hung at his shoulder turned and faced him now, in all its awful truth. Before his eyes swam the dusky room, his laboratory, its white-lined walls and tables crowded with glittering apparatus, the air weighed down, death-sweet. The blue flame had been extinguished beneath one retort, which still rested on its tripod; the bent-glass tube connecting it with the water-bath shone like molten silver in the shadow. The methane gas he had prepared in it that day, had been drawn off into broad flasks; and the flasks—

It could not be that he had neglected to seal them! He, the cautious, methodical student, whose cunning fingers would have done their task, even though the brain that ruled them should forget! Yet he saw himself turn from the unfinished experiment, Tom's letter crushed in his hand, and shut the heavy door behind him. He saw the deserted room gather dark-

ness in the deepening twilight; then, long after the night without had settled into pulseless gloom, there came a tired maid, to shutter the laboratory windows; her listless hand left the padded door ajar. A tiny crevice; yet through it there crept an enemy, soundless, baffling, unseen; a craven foe, the more terrible in that it gave no sign. Not until its crawling current should reach the flame of the hearth below would its presence be known; and then—

No, he was not in time. He staggered on, straight on, across the sweep of turf to the Elliott's. They would have carried her there. He could see her bruised dead face. If he could only tell her! But it was forever too late. "Oh, Constance, Constance!" he whispered, as if he must tell it in the ear of his anguish. "Oh, Constance, Constance!"

As he crossed the driveway some one called his name.

She was coming down the steps to meet him, wrapped in white from head to foot, her bandaged hands outstretched. In the gray of the dawn he could see the purple bruise across her forehead. He held his breath as one awaiting a blow. But she came close and looked up at him with her own quick smile.

"Somehow I knew you'd come,

Rob," she said, softly. "I've been watching for you. There was an explosion—nobody can imagine what caused it—and the house was a wreck in an hour's time. It's too bad, isn't it, dear? But the men did all they could to save it."

"You're hurt, you're hurt, Constance," he whispered. But there was a whole heaven of relief in his breaking voice.

"Only a bruise and a scorch or two. When they told me that it would all have to go, I brought out those last analyses you've been making, and— and his little things, you know"—her voice sank, but she went steadily on—"and then I went back to my room for those senior year letters of yours, and the carved beam over the door fell just as I was coming out. Nonsense, it barely grazed my shoulder. No, honestly, I'm not hurt at all. Just the same, I'm glad you're here, Rob." She put up her bandaged hands with a dear pitiful gesture, but her eyes were fixed on the reddening east.

"This sort of thing mustn't go on any longer, dear. I—I can't stand it. And besides, we're both too old and sensible—"

But Carteret had sunk on the grass before her and had hidden his face in the folds of her gown.



An Accessory After the Fact

BY CHARLES H. ROBINSON

I was sitting alone one evening at a table in an ale-house, feeling mellow and contented. A few mugs of old ale always warm up my midriff, and make my heart yearn toward all mankind. While in this blissful condition, a man I had never seen before came and sat opposite me at the same table. He seemed to be a stranger, and wishing to make him feel at home, I addressed him:

"Good evening, sir," I said.

He uttered a short grunt by way of reply, and looked at me in a supercilious way; but I was in a contented frame of mind, and did not notice his evident rebuff, so I continued.

"It is a fine evening, sir."

This time he stopped gulping the ale he had ordered, and lowering the mug from his mouth, he snorted out:

"Is it?" Then draining the mug at one swallow he called for another.

"Yes," I replied, with a rising gorge, "it is for some, but for others it is not."

"Well, what about it?" he inquired, blowing the froth off the top of his fresh mug.

There was really nothing to be said about it, moreover it was wholly immaterial, and as I merely wished to be friendly, seeing that he was a stranger, I let the conversation drop. Not so the stranger, for he eyed me in a sarcastic manner, until the magnetism of his concentrated gaze compelled me to look him full in the face. When he caught my eye, he remarked:

"Being a stranger, you thought you would take me in, eh?"

Then he seemed to laugh all over without letting any of the laugh come

out. It was sardonic, diabolic, and he looked like a veritable Mephistopheles. I then thought him to be a devil, and I still think so.

This was my first acquaintance with Mr. John Cummings, and as it turned out, I was to see more of him—too much, indeed. I disliked him from the first, because it is not pleasant to have one's friendly advances snubbed in a brutal manner, but as I saw more of him, my dislike changed to hatred. He fastened himself upon me and I could not get rid of him or even avoid him. He lay in wait for me everywhere and did not scruple to heap upon my self-esteem the most galling insults.

I could never get the better of him in any argument, and he was always arguing. Sometimes he argued me down in an amazingly simple manner, at other times he sneered me down. He would not assume that I knew anything, and he finally convinced me that I did not; that is, I did not willingly accept such a shameful mental condition, but his cold, sneering, sardonic way of making me appear small to myself, forced me to submit to his opinion in the matter against my convictions.

The truth is, he beat my mind into subjection to his own as a smith fashions metal on an anvil with a ponderous hammer. I could not prevail against him, and feeling my mental abasement, I hated him as one hates a mortal enemy.

The man even intruded upon my sleep, and became a constant nightmare. Though I might revel in the most agreeable thoughts or delicious

dreams, he would appear with his mocking, jeering face and blot them out or transform them into horrors. If I were walking in a lovely garden, teeming with roses and most exquisite flowers, he would spring out from behind some bush and mockingly change it into a barren desert. I was frequently in peril of my life through a combination of circumstances, but John Cummings always rushed to my rescue, and then sneeringly remarked that I was intended for another fate.

As time passed, the torture of my enslaved mind became intolerable, and I experienced the anguish of the damned. Whether I was asleep or awake, there was one vision constantly before my mind, that of John Cummings, who stood over me with an upraised lash which he brought down upon my back whenever I attempted to escape from my mental slavery. I devised plans to get away from him, but they proved futile. Then the idea of ridding myself of him crept into my mind, and I dallied with it until I began to see blood, an ocean of it, and in the flood of blood I could see John Cummings struggling for his life, and every time he reached the shore I pushed him back into the red tide, meanwhile laughing and dancing with glee at the sight of his struggles. I knew what this meant and what I had to do, and I set about doing it with as much deliberation as if I were about to hunt a rabbit.

I selected the basement of my house as the most favorable place to commit the deed, and having so decided, I went thither to survey the surroundings. Everything conspired in my favor. The rear half of the basement was separated from the front by a brick partition, in which was a small door which could be closed tight and locked. It had never been floored, but the earth had been leveled and

rammed hard, which was sufficient for the purposes of a rubbish, or storage room; indeed, I used it for that purpose.

Against the end wall was a collection of old rubbish, consisting of boards, boxes, nail-kegs, and barrels. There was also an upright piano packing case, which had evidently been used for workmen's tools; some barrels partly filled with broken bricks and old mortar; several barrels of cement, and a barrel or so of quick lime. All this material, so the agent informed me when I moved into the house, had been left there by the contractor who put up the building, but he had suddenly and mysteriously disappeared just upon the completion of the house, and as no one claimed the rubbish, it had been left there for lack of another place to store it. There was a rumor that this contractor had been murdered by one of his men on the day of his disappearance, as a sequel to a prolonged quarrel and fight, but as there was no evidence against the man, the matter had been permitted to drop.

I spent three nights in carefully pulling this rubbish out from the wall so as to leave a clear space behind, where I purposed digging a receptacle for John Cummings. I found a pick and shovel in the piano-box, and spent four more nights in digging a trench three feet wide, six feet long, and five feet deep. Into this I emptied a barrel of cement. I found a pickaxe helve among the boards, and determined to use it as the instrument of my vengeance. I swung it about my head with glee, in anticipation of the event, and as I did so, I fancied I heard the sardonic laughter of John Cummings. Quickly extinguishing the lantern I used for light, I waited breathlessly for him to make his appearance, but it was nothing but imagination. Placing the ax helve against the piano-box, I withdrew,

after carefully locking the door of communication, and went upstairs to my "den" to devise a plan for luring my victim into the toils.

I made it my business next day to find John Cummings and goad him into an argument. To my astonishment, I discovered that he could not convince me that I was wrong, and that he had ceased to dominate my will. He also perceived this and angrily demanded proofs.

"Proofs!" I exclaimed, "you shall have plenty and to spare. I found a box of books in the basement the other day, left there, I suppose, by some former tenant, and from a casual glance they contain more proofs than you need. If you will help me carry them up to my room, they are at your service. I can defeat you this time, eh, Cummings?" I chuckled, insolently, which angered him to the point of his saying that he would follow me to Hades for such proofs.

Descending into the basement, I put the candle I had with me in a small box turned up to screen the light, and pointing to a box placed near the piano-case, requested him to lift one end and I would take the other. As he stooped over, I took up the ax helve and struck him one blow full upon the head. He immediately dropped, and without waiting to ascertain whether he was living or dead, I dragged him to the trench and threw him in, emptying upon him a barrel of cement, half a barrel of quicklime, and following them with earth, trampling it well down with my feet and a rammer I found among the rubbish. After moving back all the rubbish, with the piano-case, over where he lay, and making a final survey to see that no one could detect anything out of place, I went upstairs and went to bed, immediately falling into a refreshing sleep.

When I say "sleep," I mean I was not troubled with any unpleasant dreams. I did, however, dream of the lost contractor, and strangely enough, although I had never seen him, he bore a strong resemblance to John Cummings, but his expression was one of content and satisfaction instead of the usual Satanic look. I was in the neighborhood of my old friend Doctor Boughton. I could see the windows of his office, through which the light streamed, for it was night, and noticed the figure of a man standing near the office door looking intently at me. I felt, rather than knew, that it was the missing contractor, though he resembled John Cummings. The figure nodded its head, smiled pleasantly, and after pointing significantly at the doctor's door, again nodded and smiled, then faded away.

That same evening, for it was noon before I awoke, I went out for an after-dinner walk. I felt elated and my spirits were buoyant in spite of the deed I had committed the night previous. I was smoking a fragrant cigar and wandered about at random. Suddenly I experienced an uncontrollable impulse to stop, and looking up, I perceived the reality of my dream of the night before. I fully expected to see the contractor standing beside the door, but I saw nothing of him except in my imagination.

"Just the man I have been thinking about all day," said the doctor when I entered the office. "I intended to look you up to-morrow, but now that you are here, I may as well tell you what I want. The wife of the contractor who built the house you are living in doesn't know whether she is a wife or a widow. She believes her husband was murdered by one of his workmen in an altercation. You know about his mysterious disappearance, eh?"

I was on my guard at once, so I said, "The agent told me he had disappeared—that is all I know about it."

"Well, we want your help now. Fanning, who was suspected of killing the contractor, has been acting very strangely of late—says the devil is after him. We have engaged a detective and want your assistance."

"Anything I can do, of course I will gladly do," said I; "but how can I help?"

"This way," explained the doctor. "Fanning had the job of filling in around the foundations of the house. He and the contractor were seen shortly before the disappearance of the latter, quarreling near the open trench. Nothing was easier than placing the body after an accidental killing—'accidental,' I say—in this trench and burying it out of sight. And—"

I think I must have fainted, for I remember losing my senses, and when I came to, I found the doctor standing over me.

"Tell me what it is," said he; "you have discovered something. In justice to the widow, if for nothing else, out with it."

I pleaded with him, but he pressed me so vigorously that I surrendered, after extracting his promise to shield me. He watched me narrowly while I was telling him the story of John Cummings, and when I had finished, he took my hand and promised to shield me.

"I can do that with perfect safety," said he. "I have known you long and know nothing to your discredit. You read too much philosophy—that is the only fault I can find in you—

and it has not done you any good, although in this particular case—well, we shall see."

I took a room at a hotel for a few days, at the end of which the doctor sent for me, and introduced me to Mrs. Parsons, the widow of the contractor. Both shook hands with me, the widow with tears in her eyes thanking me for the service I had rendered.

"Have you found his body?" I inquired, involuntarily.

"Do you recognize that face?" asked the doctor, handing me a photograph.

I looked and dropped as if shot, for it was the face of John Cummings.

When I recovered consciousness, I was in a dark room with the doctor beside me.

"Am I in prison?" was my first question.

"No, indeed," responded the doctor, cheerily; "you are in your own little 'den,'" and he drew aside the curtains, letting in a flood of light.

"But—but—that—" I could go no further for shuddering.

"O we found what we were seeking," explained the doctor. "We found the contractor's body under the pile of rubbish in the rear of your basement. It was imbedded in cement and lime, but enough remained to fully identify it. Confronted with the proofs, Fanning confessed, giving a full account of his troubles with the contractor. The next morning he committed suicide. I will give you a copy of his confession to compare with your experience with John Cummings. I find very trifling differences, except in the name of the victim."

Constitutional Smith

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Willoughby G. Schenck was one of the crookedest men that ever kept within the strict letter of the law. He was a note-shaver, and a real estate dealer, and the "slickest" and most prosperous one within the county. He held the notes and mortgages of all the farmers for miles around, and when the due day came, Willoughby G. Schenck had his pound of flesh, or he knew the reason why. That was the kind of a man he was.

And when he drove down to town one day and sold to young Peavey—a new-made heir—a ten-thousand-dollar tract of land for twenty thousand dollars, Willoughby G. Schenck considered it about the best deal he had ever made. And it was. And figuring upon the danger that young Peavey might find this out too soon, Willoughby G. Schenck insisted on taking his pay in currency and nothing else. Banks may stop payment upon checks, but the United States treasury never stops payment, except on holidays and Sundays.

"Bills is good enough for me, I guess," said Willoughby G. Schenck.

The deal was closed, and under the circumstances, old Schenck felt justified in inviting young Peavey over to the hotel and setting up the drinks and the cigars, which he accordingly did. Now, when a man orders drinks and cigars he must pay for them, and this Willoughby G. Schenck forthwith started in to do. And to do it it was necessary for him to pull out his twenty-thousand-dollar roll of bills, and peel one from the outside of the roll.

Now, while he and young Peavey

were regaling themselves at one of the many neat little tables in the place, two men sat at another neat little table not very far off. These two men were quiet, respectable, meek sort of people, and were apparently interested simply in their own affairs.

One of these two men was a man named Smith—he was a very ordinary looking chap. The other man was better dressed and had an air of importance about him. His name was Matherson—at least that is what Smith called him. But though he wore an air of importance, a careful observer might have noticed that he deferred constantly to the opinions of the man named Smith.

At length Willoughby G. Schenck rose and held out his hand.

"Mr. Peavey," he remarked to his companion, "I must be going. I am driving home, and it is getting somewhat late. One thing I want to tell you is, that you got a bargain sure this time. And you never would have got it at that price but for the fact that I was hard up for money—as I always am, in fact."

Willoughby G. Schenck toddled down the street. He met an acquaintance, and as he still was exhilarated by his good fortune—flushed with success and wine, as it were—he insisted on inviting his friend into the Palace Café for a little chat. Schenck once more paid for the refreshment. And he did it from a roll of bills containing twenty thousand dollars. This time it was not from necessity or inadvertence. He had related his success of the afternoon, and wanted to exhibit his proceeds to

back up the truth of his story. As he did so, two men stood in a corner engaged in an earnest conversation. One was named Matherson and one was Smith.

It was getting on toward dusk when old Schenck stepped into the livery where he had put up his horse. As he drove out, two men passed casually up the street. They were talking in an earnest sort of way, and never noticed Schenck as he drove along.

Gradually it grew dark. The night was chill, and as Schenck neared the outskirts of town, he considered that something strong and hot would not be much amiss. At Pat Brady's roadhouse, "The Inn," he tied his horse for a moment and went inside. There was but one man there besides Mr. Patrick Brady. Mr. Schenck, with rare generosity, invited this man and the proprietor to join him. They did so. The man was an ordinary looking fellow. His name was Smith.

Outside in the dark, the old horse whinnied as he thought of home and supper. A well-dressed man stepped up and rubbed him gently on the nose. The man waited there for five minutes, and then he sauntered carelessly up the road.

Inside, Mr. Smith hastily excused himself and left. He, too, walked up the road. Some ten minutes later, Willoughby G. Schenck, with a comfortable feeling of warmth within, stepped into his old conveyance, tucked the laprobe securely about him, and then drove on.

Mr. Schenck, agreeably affected by the fresh air without and the warmth within, after a while began to nod. How often or how long he had been nodding he did not know, but he was suddenly awakened by the shying of his horse. He straightened up and looked from side to side upon the road, but there was nothing there.

Suddenly he rose to his feet and

uttered a wild, inarticulate cry of terror. And he had good cause. For there, almost beside him, stretching out in the half darkness, was the white hand of a man stealing toward the reins. He uttered another cry, turned suddenly, and then—

And then, something vivid, and flaming, and jagged, like a stroke of lightning, entered his head and brain—and the world went out in darkness. Two minutes later old Willoughby G. Schenck was lying at the roadside unconscious and half dead. It was weeks before he finally recovered.

The old horse, left to itself, trailed on toward home. But old Schenck's cry of terror had been heard, singularly enough, for it was not a loud cry. Help was near at hand. From up and down the road voices answered his.

And one man, in the midst of the confusion, who was more efficient and practical than the rest, seemed to be pursuing another man, who seemed to be the old man's assailant. The assailant, immediately upon the commission of the assault, had bent for a moment above the body, and then hearing the shouts of the rescuers, had hidden for an instant in the shadow of the wall. It was a bad place from whence to escape, for the road was lined with a high wall on each side. Suddenly the man darted up the road and out toward the country. Few saw him, but that one man did is certain. That man was the man who dashed after him. And these two, the pursuer and the pursued, were met by the rescuers who were coming toward the town, and when the first of these arrived, one man was holding fast to the other.

The captured man was a man of ordinary appearance—his captor was well dressed.

"My name, gentlemen," said the latter, "is Matherson—Oscar Mather-

son. I was strolling toward the town when I saw this man assault the other. I call upon you to aid me in giving him into custody."

The other man looked around at the crowd. He stood perfectly motionless. He said nothing. The crowd went back to help the old man, and took the prisoner with them. The old man was bleeding profusely from a cut in the head. He, too, had nothing to say, under the circumstances at that time nor for many hours thereafter.

The man called Matherson repeated his charge to an officer. The officer addressed the culprit. "Did you do that?" he asked.

The culprit shook his head.

"I did not," he replied, "but this man did," pointing to the man Matherson. Matherson laughed. He dusted his hands and wiped his face with a linen handkerchief. The crowd also laughed. They took the culprit back to town, but at his earnest request detained Matherson as the complaining witness.

Once there, the prisoner gave his name as Smith. To all questions he merely answered, "I reserve my defense until my trial."

In due time he was tried. No money—no portion of the twenty thousand dollars was ever found. The old man Schenck recovered sufficiently to attend the trial. But his testimony amounted to nothing. He had not seen the man who struck him—his remembrance of the occurrence was hazy anyway. Matherson was the important witness. He swore that Smith had done the trick. But he made a poor witness, for he contradicted himself and floundered around, and became confused and red in the face. And there were many things about himself that he failed or neglected to explain. Altogether he was unsatisfactory. The district at-

torney swore under his breath as Matherson stepped from the witness-stand, but Smith's lawyer was jubilant. The prosecution rested—and then Smith went on.

Smith's testimony was as straight as a string. He accused Matherson of the crime. He described it—with all the details. And that was not all. Smith proved beyond question that there was not a drop of blood upon his own clothes after the assault, and he produced before the jury, by the grace of a private detective who had been able to secure it, the very suit that Matherson had worn that night. It was smeared with blood from head to foot. He also showed that Matherson on that night had a slight scratch upon his hand, which he claimed to have received in the struggle with Smith. And he proved that he, Smith, did not struggle or resist arrest. He further proved that Matherson, while awaiting the trial of Smith, had been spending money freely about the town, although it was admitted that no money was found on Matherson that night. At the close of the direct examination, the district attorney started in to cross-examine. But it was no use. Smith could not be broken down. He had carefully prepared his case, and unquestionably he was right. The jury reached a verdict of "Not guilty" without leaving their seats in the court-room. Smith was set free.

And then Matherson was arrested—Matherson who clearly was the guilty man. He, too, was speedily tried. Now, it must be remembered at this juncture that no persons outside of Smith and Matherson saw the crime committed. The charge against Matherson, therefore, necessarily depended upon Smith. The court-room was crowded. The district attorney made a brief speech—a long one was

unnecessary, for the whole town knew the facts.

"Thomas B. Smith," called the prosecutor. Smith took the stand.

"Now, Smith," began the prosecutor, "tell us where you were on the evening of the 13th of last month."

Smith smiled, and told him. He also told him that he saw old Schenck driving along in the dark.

"Well, now," went on the district attorney, "tell us just what happened."

Again Smith smiled. He pulled out of his hip pocket a long, villainous-looking, black object. By many of the spectators it was recognized as a "black-jack."

"Now, I'll tell you, governor," went on Smith, "just what happened. I was in Brady's road-house when this old duck come in and flashed a wad of bills—that's what he did and nothin' else. I didn't have a cent, and that's a fact. Well, sir, I left before the old duck went out, and I trailed up the road a piece, and—"

"And did you see the prisoner Matherson?" interposed the lawyer. Smith went on.

"And counselor," he said, "what did I do, when the old duck come ridin' on asleep; but jump into his carriage and catch hold of his reins, and rap him on the top of his nut with me old friend Tommy Jones here"—he waved the black-jack in the air—"and put him to sleep for fair. An'—"

"What," roared the district attorney, "do you mean to tell me that the prisoner Matherson did not commit this crime?"

"I do that, counselor," returned the witness, "for I did the thing meself."

"What did you mean by your testimony in the other trial, then?" went on the prosecutor. Smith waved his hand.

"Now, that's all right, too," he went on; "I put the blood on Matherson's clothes, and I told a lie against him, thinking it would clear me and do him no harm. But I ain't a-goin' to see no man go to jail for me," said Smith, appealing to the jury; "and I want to say right here that what I said before was wrong, and what I'm sayin' now is right, and I'm willin' to go and take what's comin' to me, and that's as fair as I can say. That's all."

He stepped down. The trial had to be concluded in some way. The district attorney had no other witness, and if he had this witness would have queered his case. Matherson went on the stand and repeated his former testimony. And that's all there was to it.

The jury acquitted him. As soon as the verdict was announced, Smith jumped up and started for the door. But he was brought back. A policeman attended to that.

The clerk hastily drew up a complaint and the district attorney had it sworn to. Smith merely smiled.

"What am I held for, gents?" he inquired.

The district attorney shook his fist at him. "You're held for this crime, young fellow," he said, angrily; "haven't you confessed that you did the thing? Take him away and lock him up."

Mr. Smith struck an attitude, and with one hand in the air, addressed the court. "Your Honor," he said, "I stand upon my rights as an American citizen. Let me have that there complaint." He took it and read it over. "Judge, your Honor," he went on, "I demand to be set free—and on the ground of constitutional privilege."

The judge scratched his head. "What privilege, sir?" he asked.

Smith's voice became low and sweet. "On the ground, your

Honor," he concluded, "that under the constitution of this commonwealth, no man can be twice tried for the same offense. I was acquitted once, and you can't try me any more," he said, boldly shaking his fist under the district attorney's nose.

The judge looked over his spectacles. "The man is right," he said to the district attorney; "his law is sound, and much as I regret, you must set him free."

That night at dusk, two men climbed from a field, over a high wall, into the road. One of them, a man named Smith, felt with his hands along the wall, and when he came to a certain spot, he removed a stone, and took from a crevice a good-sized roll of bills. It was the twenty thousand dollars that old Schenck had lost.

Once more climbing the stone wall, the two men sat down in the field in the light of the full moon, and divided the proceeds into uneven shares—Smith, by common consent, received

the larger share. And from that field these two men, one of whom was Matherson, passed by easy stages, out of the sight of men.

But in their flight, Smith stopped suddenly and slapped his leg with violence.

"By George!" he exclaimed, "I never thought of it—that was a narrow escape."

"What's that?" asked Matherson, in some alarm.

"By George!" returned the other, "those blamed old fools made a thundering big mistake. They could 'a' held me just as well as not."

"For what?" asked Matherson.

Smith snorted. "Why for perjury, you blamed idiot," he answered; "but lucky for me in the excitement they never even thought of it. It must 'a' been my speech on the constitution that put it clean out of their minds. And by the way, what did you think of that there little speech—did you ever hear a better one?"

The Spy on Sallie

BY WILLIAM H. HINRICHSSEN

"What are you saddling that horse for?" said Farmer Lane to his hired man, Jack Felton, coming around the carriage-house.

"Miss Sallie told me to," said Jack, throwing the saddle on the pony and reaching for the girth underneath the animal's body. "Reckon she wants to go to town after dinner."

"Well, take off that saddle and turn the pony into the pasture," said the farmer, shortly.

Jack hesitated for an instant only, then remarking, "You're the captain," he pulled the saddle from the

pony's back, hung it on its peg in the carriage-house, and tied the pony to the fence.

"I said turn it into the pasture," said the farmer, angrily.

"Yes," said Jack, reflectively, "but it's hard to catch, and some one else may want it after dinner."

The farmer muttered something, and then, as the dinner-bell rang, walked toward the house. Jack followed him, grinning.

"Did you saddle Beauty, Jack?" asked Miss Lane, as they sat down to dinner.

"No," said her father, shortly; "I told him not to. I'm tired of this everlasting tramping to town."

"You are?" said Sallie, saucily. "Beauty belongs to me and I'll ride her when I please, and if you won't let Jack saddle her, I'll do it myself."

"Father," said Mrs. Lane, timidly, "I want some things from town, and I asked Sallie to ride in and get them for me."

Sallie smiled at her father maliciously and Jack grinned.

Farmer Lane frowned and mentally accused his wife of stretching the truth. He was silent for a minute and then said, "I want to send Jack to town for some things this afternoon. He can do your errands."

Sallie pouted, but Mrs. Lane said, quietly, "The things I want cannot be selected by a man. Sallie must go, or I'll have to."

Sallie beamed on her mother, and the farmer, cornered, fidgeted for a minute, and then said, desperately, "Jack will go in the road-wagon. Sallie can go with him."

Sallie pouted again, but looking at Jack she caught from him a faint nod, and being quick-witted, said, "That will suit me better. Hitch up right away after dinner, Jack."

"Yes 'm," said Jack, taking the extra large piece of pie she handed him.

When he had finished his dinner Jack hurried to the barn. Mr. Lane followed him.

"Jack," said the farmer, "I don't want you to let Sallie out of your sight for a minute."

Jack stared.

"She's just going to see that dude, Bill Foster," said the farmer, "and I don't like it."

"The gentleman who was here last Sunday?" asked Jack.

"The same feller," said the farmer, contemptuously. "A dry-goods clerk at Hammell's. Nothing to him but

his clothes. Sallie's got a notion for him, and he's after her money."

"Why don't you forbid him the house?" said Jack, quizzically.

"That's the trouble," said Mr. Lane. "It would be just like Sallie to run away and marry him. She feels independent, you know. She'll soon be twenty-one and she's got a hundred and sixty acres of her own, left by her Uncle Jim."

"Oh," said Jack.

"Now, Jack," said the farmer, persuasively, "I want you to watch her closely and bring her home as soon as you get through trading. Won't you?"

"I don't like to play the spy, boss," said Jack.

"O pshaw, Jack, that's nothing. You do what I ask you to, and I'll let you use the roan colt every Sunday."

Jack hesitated a minute, and then said, "I'll do it, and you bet I'll keep my eye on her."

The pony drew the road-wagon rapidly along, and Jack, dressed in his Sunday clothes, looked shyly at Sallie sitting by his side.

"What did you mean by that nod you gave me at dinner, Jack?" she asked.

Jack grinned and replied, "I wanted to let you know that I wouldn't be in the way in town."

"I thought so," said Sallie. "You are a good fellow."

"Thank you," said Jack.

Jack Felton had been working for Farmer Lane for several months, and had proved himself a good hand, but Sallie had never noticed him before. He was just one of the hired men. Now she looked at him closely and saw that in his "good clothes" he was handsome. She questioned him about himself, found that he was quite well educated and well read. He had been raised in town, he said, but inheriting a farm, he thought he would

work out a year or two before going to work for himself.

"How odd," thought Sallie; "just like a story."

"Let me out at Hammell's," she said, as they drove into town, "and call for me in two hours."

Jack nodded.

Somehow Mr. Foster's small talk across the counter was not as interesting as usual that day, and Sallie was glad when Jack called for her.

Jack's report to his employer was satisfactory, and he was regularly employed as a spy upon Sallie. Every time she went to town Jack was sent as her escort, and her visits became more and more frequent.

One Saturday Sallie and Jack were a little late in getting back from town, and when they drove into the yard the supper-bell was ringing. They alighted and Sallie ran into the house. Jack began unhitching the horse.

"Any trouble to-day, Jack?" said the farmer.

"Not much," said Jack, coolly, "but you won't have any more trouble with that dude."

"You haven't killed him, have you, Jack?" asked the farmer, in consternation.

"No," said Jack, coolly, and leading the pony from the shafts, "but I have married Sallie."

"What?" roared the old man. "You ornery scoundrel."

"Yes," said Jack. "Got the license, went to the Baptist preacher, and he tied us tight and fast."

"You sha'n't have a cent of my money," shouted the old man.

"Don't need it," said Jack, contemptuously. "Sallie has one farm. I have another."

Mrs. Lane and Sallie appeared on the scene.

"Now don't rant, pa," said Sallie. "We're married and you can't help it. Ma says it's all right."

"Yes, Jacob," said Mrs. Lane. "Jack is well behaved and industrious. Sallie says he is well off, and they were married by our minister."

The old man was conquered, but he attempted a final compromise. "Will you stay and work through corn cutting?" he asked.

"Yes," said Jack, promptly. "We'll stay till the first of next March. We want to go to house-keeping then."

"All right, then," said the farmer. "Let's go in to supper."

A Born Diplomat

BY UNA HUDSON

"But what's the hitch?" Jack Morton asked. "I thought you had a cinch."

"Cinch!" Jared Hollister snorted. "Cinch, indeed! There's no such thing in politics. That idiot Morris—Bob Morris, man I haven't spoken to in years, man I would spend my last dollar to defeat—Morris wants it, too. Nice governor he would make! Then there's some jay from the moun-

tains, Hiram something or other, with ten or a dozen hayseed delegates pledged to him. Then some ass let loose a lot of women delegates. And some other blundering idiot made 'em all mad. Morris says one of my men did it, but Morris always was a liar, so we've given it out cold that the Morris gang did it. Result is that the women are down on us both and they have organized and caucused

and cliqued together, and now they're running around with their noses up in the air and you can't touch 'em with a ten-foot pole. Cinch! O yes, nice cinch I've got."

"But Morris surely can't cut much ice."

"He's got money," Hollister said, "and he's spending it like water, and his following's growing all the time. The man who can make terms with the women or the hayseed gets the nomination. And the hayseed is as stubborn as Balaam's ass; it's governor or nothing with him. And tomorrow the governor will be nominated, and nobody knows what those women intend to do."

"Women are easy to manage," Morton said, airily. "Try diplomacy, theater tickets, boxes of candy, flowers, all that sort of thing."

"O yes, give 'em a theater party, the whole two dozen of 'em, and treat 'em to champagne and oysters afterwards. What would my wife say?"

"Not all of them," Morton deprecated; "but isn't there some one who is their leader?"

"Of course. Little typewriter girl. Used to be stenographer for the chairman of the county central committee. She got on to a few things while she was in his office, and now, by Jove, she's on to her job."

"All right. Tackle her. I'll do it for you. Just take me around and present me."

"O by all means try it if you like, but you won't be able to do anything with her," Hollister said, glumly.

But he put on his hat, and together they went around to the office where Miss McKay spent her days.

She was a small, sharp-featured woman of uncertain age and nondescript coloring. When Morton, after a few moments of desultory chat, begged that she would accompany him to the theater that evening, she hesi-

tated perceptibly before accepting, and he writhed uncomfortably under the keen scrutiny of her cold gray eyes, for he knew that his invitation had been somewhat precipitate, and not altogether disinterested.

But when he called for her in the evening she was smiling and friendly. Then, too, she appeared to much better advantage than she had in the morning, for the lace scarf she wore over her head and about her throat seemed to soften her sharp little face, and excitement had stained her cheeks a delicate pink. Her gloves were good, her handkerchief fine and dainty, and her shoes irreproachable. All of which Morton noticed and liked, for he had rather an eye for a well-groomed woman.

She settled into her seat with a little gurgle of almost childish happiness.

"It's such a treat for me," she whispered softly to Morton. "It is so very seldom that I can go to the theater."

And Morton, to whom the play was an old story, found himself taking pleasure in her pleasure.

She was a good listener, too, which is quite another thing and vastly more difficult than being a good talker, and Morton, who generally said but little, found himself conversing with a certain fluency that both amazed and delighted him.

But strangely enough he made no reference to the gubernatorial nomination. Miss McKay's attitude was so entirely that of a lady accepting a social courtesy at the hands of a friend, and her enjoyment was so evident, that what in the morning had seemed simple and easy of accomplishment, had now, in the evening, become both difficult and embarrassing. It was after the play, and while they discussed a choice little supper in a very exclusive up-town restaur-

ant, that she herself finally broached the subject.

"Are you interested in politics?" she asked, abruptly.

And Morton, who by now was feeling something of a cad, and wished himself well out of it, answered, "Not in the least."

"But," Miss McKay insisted, "you are a friend of Mr. Hollister's, are you not?"

"Yes."

"Then you are just the man I want to talk to. You see," she explained, "I am a delegate to the state convention. There are more than twenty of us women delegates, and we have determined all to vote for the same man for governor, but we can't decide whether to vote for Mr. Morris or Mr. Hollister. I don't exactly understand why, but for some reason our votes seem to be of very great importance, so of course we want to vote for the better man."

"Of course," Morton admitted, "I would like to see Hollister get the nomination."

"They are not on friendly terms, Mr. Morris and Mr. Hollister?" Miss McKay ventured.

"Friendly terms! I should say not. Either one of them would move heaven and earth to keep the other from getting the nomination."

"I guessed as much," Miss McKay said, "because"—she leaned across the table and lowered her voice—"because to-day a man came to me from Mr. Morris and said that if we would only vote for Mr. Morris he would 'make it all right' with us. Wasn't it horrid of him? He was actually trying to buy our votes."

"Morris is buying all the votes he can," Morton said. "And since you have brought up the subject, Miss McKay, I really would be glad if you could see your way clear to vote for Hollister."

"There is another man in the race, too," Miss McKay said, thoughtfully; "a man from the country; Hiram Bates, I think his name is. He controls some votes. Why doesn't Mr. Hollister do business with him? I should think their united strength might possibly be sufficient to nominate the governor."

"Bates won't do business," Morton said.

"But he can't get the nomination," Miss McKay said, contemptuously.

Morton shrugged eloquently, and Miss McKay laughed.

Morton joined in the laugh. "You perhaps know Bates," he suggested.

"Well, I've seen him," Miss McKay said, and they both laughed again.

The laugh established between them a certain camaraderie. Morton felt himself upon solid ground. He leaned across the table, and spoke confidentially.

"Miss McKay," he said, "you can't afford to let a guy like that carry off the nomination for governor. And if you throw your votes to Morris that is exactly what will happen, for Hollister will at once instruct his men to vote for Bates."

"O no," Miss McKay cried, "he surely wouldn't do that!"

"But he would," Morton insisted. "He would give the nomination to Bates rather than see Morris get it."

"That," said Miss McKay, "puts the matter in an entirely different light. We are going to caucus in the morning before the convention opens, and I'll do my very best for Mr. Hollister. And I suppose he would like to know before the balloting begins, the result of our caucus."

"Yes," Morton said, "I think he would."

"Then I'll send him word," Miss McKay promised, "and I'll do all I can for him."

At the door of her boarding place she repeated her promises, and Morton, feeling that diplomats, like poets, were born, not made, departed in search of Jared Hollister.

"She was dead easy," he confided to that anxious gentleman. "Said she would do all she could for you. They're going to caucus in the morning, and she'll let you know the result before the balloting begins. Morris had offered her money, too."

"Morton," Hollister said, "you are a wonder."

"I think, myself," Morton agreed, complacently, "that it was rather neat. But it's all in knowing how."

The convention of the following day began very much as had other conventions. Preliminaries were disposed of and it was announced that nominations for governor would be in order.

Whereupon one of the coming men of the state rose, and in a brilliant speech placed in nomination "that scholarly gentleman and able lawyer, Jared Hollister."

When the round of applause that greeted the name of Jared Hollister had died away, an ex-United States senator in a burst of oratorical fireworks placed before the convention the name of Robert K. Morris.

Then a delegate from the farming district begged to nominate one Hiram Bates, whom nobody seemed to know.

Meanwhile, two agitated gentlemen, representatives respectively of the two leading candidates for governor, were waiting anxiously for the promised report from the women's caucus.

But it was not until the ballots were being distributed that they were enabled to report to their respective delegations.

In due course the ballots were collected, read, and counted, when it was discovered that the convention had, to the very last delegate, voted for Hiram Bates as nominee for governor. Nobody understood exactly how it had happened, but none the less it was an indisputable fact that Hiram Bates had received an unanimous nomination.

Some three months later the state received a second severe shock when Hiram Bates, governor-elect, wedded a certain Miss McKay, a one-time stenographer, whom most people had never even heard of, but whom a few remembered as having been a delegate to the convention.

The wedding was a very quiet one, but among the invited guests, however, was Mr. Jack Morton. His invitation was accompanied by a note from the bride-elect that read as follows:

"My Dear Mr. Morton—

We are very anxious, Hiram and I, that you should be present at our wedding. You perhaps don't realize how deeply we are indebted to you, but it's perfectly true that Hiram owed his nomination entirely to you. We had quite decided that the votes we controlled, Hiram and I, should be given to Mr. Hollister, with the understanding that Hiram should be lieutenant-governor. And then, just in the nick of time you told me that if my votes went to Mr. Morris, Mr. Hollister would give his to Hiram. And that gave me an idea; so just before the balloting began, I sent word to Mr. Hollister that the women delegates had decided to vote for Mr. Morris, and Mr. Morris I told that we intended to vote for Mr. Hollister, and then we all voted for Hiram.

"Do come, Mr. Morton, I want you to meet Hiram. He may not be much to look at, but he will make an awfully good governor. And if there's anything you want that he can give you, why it's yours.

"Sincerely yours,
"HELEN MCKAY."

And because he had a sense of humor, and because, too, it is a good thing to possess the friendship of the governor of one's state, Jack Morton went to the wedding.

Editorial

THE RED BOOK wants to make friends of its readers, and it is the simplest of axioms to say that the best way to have friends is to deserve them. Therefore, it is the fundamental purpose to deserve friends, by offering such matter between the covers of the magazine as will appeal to readers for its genuine interest and merit.

THE RED BOOK has few fixed prejudices to overcome, few plans not subject to modification. It is the aim to give intelligent readers what they desire, and always it will be a pleasure to receive, and a satisfaction to defer to, suggestions from such readers as to what will best please them. Signal your preferences to the Editor—favorite authors, favorite fields of fiction, short stories or serials, romance, mystery, adventure, character, what you will, and be sure that you will have friendly judgment.

But certain standards are established, to any infraction of which THE RED BOOK will not yield. It is to be invariably interesting, invariably wholesome, invariably decent, invariably cheerful, and it expects to win friends among those whose preferences are for the interesting, the wholesome, the decent, and the cheerful. It is believed that these standards need not in any way conflict with each other, but rather are of mutual support. Stories need not be either of shady morals or gloomy spirits to be interesting. THE RED BOOK is no place for preaching, except as its clever stories of clever people, by virtue of their cleverness, preach the gospel of cheerfulness and good-will. If ever there be printed here a story of sadness, it will be but to accent more strongly some phase of happiness, material or otherwise, that is made conspicuous by the contrast.

When you stop to think of it, does not the name of the magazine suggest these qualities? Red is the color of cheerfulness, of brightness, of gayety. It is the most brilliant color in the spectrum, and the one which is chosen—so the scientists tell us—as the most beautiful, by four out of five persons. It is the color of the most brilliant displays in nature, from sunsets to autumn foliage. Therefore THE RED BOOK.

The plans for each successive number of the magazine, with the special attractions offered, will be announced from month to month. It is believed that the magazine which presents in a single issue such an array of the best stories by writers of fame and ability as fill the current number needs to make few promises as to its future offerings. Morgan Robertson, Elizabeth Phipps Train, W. A. Fraser, General Charles King, Cy Warman, and René Bache lead a table of contents which must appeal to any critic as distinctly enticing.

The most distinguished feature of the June number, announced at length elsewhere, is a noteworthy contribution by David Graham Phillips, author of the tremendous serial success, "Golden Fleece," which has won such favor in the *Saturday Evening Post*. For THE RED BOOK he has returned to American characters throughout, abandoning the medium of the short story, and writing his first play, a play calculated equally for delightful reading and for stage production, amateur or professional. "A Point of Law" it is called, and its scene is a southern plantation mansion, the episode a dramatic one, and the dénouement both natural and theatrical, with a genuine appeal to every reader.

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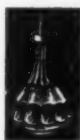
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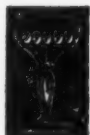
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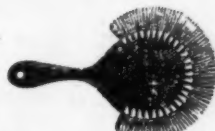
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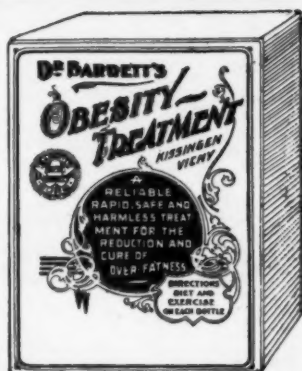


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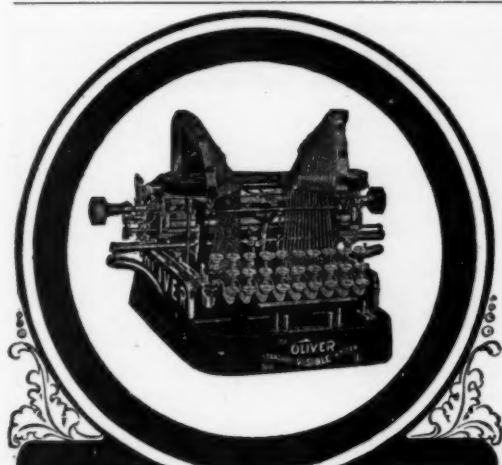
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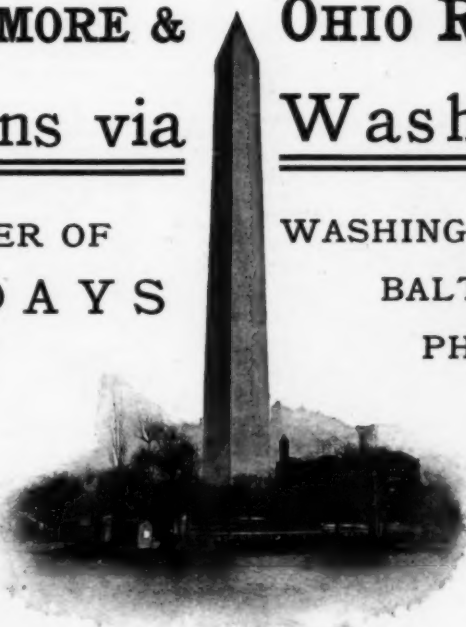
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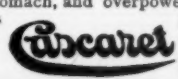


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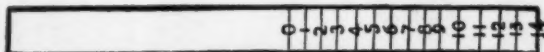
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